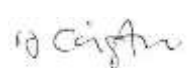




Victoria Academies Trust

STAFF LEAVE OF ABSENCE POLICY v 5.0

Date of last review:	July 2026	Review period:	1 year
Date of next review:	July 2027	Owner:	COO
Type of policy:	Trust	LGB or Board approval:	Trust Board
Signed			

1. INTRODUCTION

This policy applies to all employees of Victoria Academies Trust (VAT).

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.

It is also important to bear in mind that requests for leave must be considered against the overall working arrangements of the different categories of staff and, in particular, the need for arrangements to be made to cover such absences.

2. SCOPE AND PURPOSE

This policy applies to all employees of the Trust. The intention of this policy is to consider requests for annual leave and other leave which falls outside that covered under conditions of service, other policies or legislation. For example, arrangements in respect of adoption leave, maternity leave, parental leave, paternity leave and Standard Teachers Pay and Conditions.

Reasonable requests for leave will be considered on an individual basis by the Head teacher (school based staff) /line manager (central trust staff). Any subsequent disputes will be resolved by ELT. Approval of annual leave will not be unreasonably withheld. Applications for leave can be made by completing the relevant request form.

3. TEACHERS' ANNUAL LEAVE

There is no provision for annual leave entitlement for teachers. Teachers are required by statutory order under the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions of Service Document to be available for work for 195 days each year (of which 190 shall be days on which they may be required to teach students).

The Head teacher/line manager should not normally receive any requests from teaching staff to take a holiday within term time and any requests within term time should be by exception.

4. SUPPORT STAFF ANNUAL LEAVE

Entitlement to annual leave for support staff is as specified in their individual contracts of employment. The taking of annual leave is subject to the prior approval of the line manager.

The provision for support staff employed on a term-time only basis is the same as for teaching staff above. The annual leave year for support staff runs from 1 September to 31 August. For all year-round staff, the timing of holidays must be in agreement with operational requirements and some staff may be expected to take annual leave within the Trust holidays. However, there will be occasions when such staff wish to take leave during term time. Where possible, this leave will be granted, having given due

regard to the demand or urgent need of the service. All support staff are expected to take their holidays regularly through the year. Permission may be withheld if holidays have not been used and have built up, with a view to be taken in one go, or at a time that is not appropriate for the running of the academy /team.

Staff may not carry forward any holidays into the next holiday period. Any exceptions must be approved by the Headteacher or the ELT.

To assist in the planning of annual leave, the management team will consider the times of year when support staff will definitely need to be present and times where there may be more flexibility. Where the management wishes to have a closure period during the holidays, this will be notified to all year round staff at the beginning of the academic year.

5. OTHER LEAVE OF ABSENCES

The Trust recognises that there may be times when employees will need to take additional time away from work and will comply with any statutory regulations regarding time off for employees.

Employees seeking to take leave of absence must gain approval from their line manager in advance of the leave commencing. In exceptional circumstances, it may be necessary for employees to be absent from work before a request can be made and approved. In these circumstances, the request should be made as soon as possible, with approval or non-approval of the request being made retrospectively. There is no intention to remove any rights previously conveyed to employees. The granting of leave is at the discretion of the Head teacher or ELT, but approval will not be unreasonably withheld.

Where an employee wishes to challenge a decision, an appeal should be made to the Headteacher or the COO.

The granting of leave will be monitored and reviewed on a regular basis to ensure fair and consistent application of the procedures for all employees.

There may be situations where paid leave is not appropriate, and in this case unpaid leave or time off in lieu arrangements may be considered.

The following are examples of leave of absence which may be requested (this is not an exhaustive list):

- bereavement leave
- time off to care for dependants
- urgent domestic reasons
- jury service / witness summons
- justice of the Peace (Magistrate) duties
- other public duties
- personal health and welfare
- examination and revision leave
- Union facilitation time

- religious observance
- service in non-regular armed forces / volunteer reserve services
- School Governing Duties/Trustee

If an employee takes leave without permission from the Trust/ academy, the leave will be considered unauthorised unpaid leave and may result in disciplinary action being taken against the employee, including dismissal. Therefore, it is important that all employees follow the relevant procedures before taking leave for whatever reason.

Loss of a child

A minimum of two weeks' leave will be granted for staff who have lost a child under the age of 18, or who have suffered a still birth from 24 weeks of pregnancy.

Staff are entitled to one week of unpaid leave every 12 months to care for dependants with long term needs. A week is pro-rated to part time employees. This leave can be taken all at once, as half days or full days.

Bereaved Partner's Paternity Leave

Employees whose lose their partner (the primary carer of a child) within the first year of the child's birth or adoption can take a single period up to 52 weeks of unpaid leave to care for the child. The affected employee must be the father of the child, or partner of primary carer.

Leave can only start after the bereavement date and within a 52-week eligibility period. Notice period needs to be provided. If the leave is starting within 8 weeks of the bereavement date, notice can be given before the start of the first day of absence –orally or in writing.

If leave is starting more than 8 weeks after the bereavement date, at least one weeks' notice must be given in writing. Up to 10 Keeping in Touch (KIT) days can be used during the leave without ending the leave.

Parental Leave

Employees are eligible to take unpaid parental leave to look after their child's welfare, for example to: or example to: spend more time with their children, look at new schools, settle children into new childcare arrangements, spend more time with family, such as visiting grandparents.

Employees are entitled to 18 weeks' leave for each child and adopted child, up to their 18th birthday. The limit on how much parental leave each parent can take in a year is 4 weeks for each child (unless the employer agrees otherwise).

Parental leave must be taken as whole weeks (for example 1 week or 2 weeks) rather than individual days, unless the Headteacher/Manager agrees otherwise or if the child is disabled. The leave does not have to be taken all at once. A 'week' equals the length of time an employee normally works over 7 days.

Employees qualify for parental leave if all of the below criteria applies:

- they're named on the child's birth or adoption certificate

- or they have or expect to have parental responsibility
- they're not self-employed or a 'worker', for example an agency worker or contractor, they're not a foster parent (unless they've secured parental responsibility, through the courts)
- the child is under 18 years old

Employees are required to give 21 days' notice before the intended start date of their leave. If they or their partner is having a baby or adopting, it's 21 days before the week the baby or child is expected.

Employees must confirm the start and end dates in their notice. Unless an employer requests it, this does not have to be in writing.

The Headteacher/Manager must agree an unpaid parental leave request unless they can show that it would cause significant disruption to the school/Trust. If the Headteacher/Manager refuses the leave, they can agree a revised date with the employee.

Carer's Leave

Carer's leave cannot be used to provide general childcare but can be for a child who has long-term health or disability-related care needs. This is covered by unpaid parental leave.

The amount of leave does not increase if the employee has more than one dependant in need of care, it is still a maximum of one working week every 12 months.

Carer's Leave is available to staff who need to give or arrange care for a dependant who has:

- A physical or mental illness or injury that means they need care for more than three months
- A disability as defined by the Equality Act 2010
- Care needs because of their old age.

A dependant is defined as an employee's spouse, civil partner, child or parent, any person who lives in the same household as the employee (other than as a lodger or similar), or any other person who would reasonably rely on the employee to provide or arrange care. This does not have to be a family member.

Staff must give notice if they intend to take carer's leave, specifying that they are eligible for the leave and the day(s) they intend to take it. The notice should be twice as many days as the number of days requested. However, the Headteacher can waive this requirement if they wish.

5. PROCEDURE

All requests for time off must be made at the earliest opportunity on Every HR system to their Headteacher/Line Manager. To complete a request, you must log on to Every HR www.every.education

You must click on to 'my portal' on the main menu on the left hand side and then click on to 'my leave section' and at the top click either 'request general absence' or 'request holiday'. Please use this link as guidance on how to complete a request of leave. [Every HR -](#)

When requesting a 'general absence you will be asked to enter a **reason for the absence, the first date of absence and the last date of your absence**. An absence reason won't be required if you are requesting holidays.

Once you have entered all these fields, click the tick box within the roles section and this will give you a suggested number of days for the absence. Please double check the suggested amount and enter as appropriate.

Once all the above has been entered click the green **Save** button. You will then receive an email notification confirming the absence has been entered and is going through the approval process. A further email will be sent once your absence approver (Headteacher/line manager) has actioned the absence.

Part-time employees will be entitled to time off, under the terms of this policy, pro rata to their contractual hours. The Head teacher/ line manager 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/ line manager may agree that an employee can make up lost time as an alternative to loss of pay.

APPENDIX 1

Leave of absence schedule. Below is an **indicative** guide of absence for each particular reasons:

	Reason for absence	Maximum period of absence (school days)	With or without pay	
			Term-time only	All-year-round staff
1	Death of member of immediate family*	Up to 3 days (with extra travelling time of up to 3 days if necessary)	With pay	
2	Death of child under the age of 18	Minimum of 2 weeks	With pay	
3	Wedding of any member of immediate family**	1 day	With pay	
3a	Wedding of member of family (other than immediate)	1 day	Without pay	Holiday request
4	Jury service	See conditions of service	With pay (employee must claim an allowance from court)	
5	Attendance at interviews – posts connected with education	At VAT discretion	With pay	
6	Attendance at interviews	As necessary	With pay	

7	Attendance at meetings of Examiners for approved examinations	As arranged with HT or ELT	With pay
8	Attendance at courses approved by the HT or ELT	As necessary	With pay
9	Other examination leave and study where not directly related to the job	As necessary	With or without pay
10	Attendance at a religious ceremony or observation of religious festival which the staff member is under a moral obligation to attend or observe by reason of his/her membership of, or office in, a church or religious order	Up to 2 days per year	With pay
11	Religious pilgrimages or observances longer than one day.	Headteachers discretion	Without pay
12	Union facilitation time	As necessary	As necessary
13	Moving house	1 day	With pay
14	Illness of member of immediate family	Headteachers discretion	With pay
15	Attendance at university graduation ceremony etc. where self or member of immediate family is receiving a degree, diploma or certificate	1 day	With pay

Definitions of “immediate family” For the purpose of this scheme, “immediate family” shall include: Wife, Father, Mother-in-law, Partner, Husband, Brother, Father-in-law, Stepfather, Son, Sister, Grandmother, Stepmother, Daughter, Guardian, Grandfather, Stepbrother, Mother, Ward, Grandchild, Stepsister, Stepchildren, adopted parents, adopted siblings, foster children