Barking & Dagenham

Schools Leave of Absence Policy

School Name	
Date of Adoption:	
Chair of Governors Signature:	
Head Teacher Signature:	

The Schools HR Advisory Service will automatically update this Policy/Procedure to comply with any changes to legislation or ACAS guidance, to make corrections or increase the understanding and notify schools of the amendments.

This guidance should not be amended by a School, except for entering details above. Any changes will invalidate the Policy.

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Overview

This Policy is designed to ensure compliance with statutory requirements and promote best practice within the School. It supports staff well-being, retention, and performance by providing clear processes and fair treatment.

Where this policy provides less than a statutory entitlement in force at the relevant time, the statutory entitlement will apply.

Schools are asked to monitor and review the implementation of this Policy regularly, using measurable indicators such as staff retention rates, absence trends, and feedback from staff surveys.

Evidence of impact will be documented and available for inspection to demonstrate how this Policy contributes to improved teaching quality and positive outcomes for pupils.

This document outlines the updated arrangements for Leave of Absence in Barking and Dagenham Schools. These arrangements have been locally consulted with recognised Trade Unions, Professional Associations, and the Local Authority. They are designed to:

- Set out minimum reasonable provisions for leave of absence.
- Highlight statutory entitlements.
- Acknowledge the position of school staff whose contracts do not permit annual leave during term time.

These leave arrangements are recommended to Governing Bodies for adoption.

Community and Voluntary-Controlled Schools using Human Resource Providers other than the Local Authority recognised service provision must ensure that said Providers adhere to the agreed Policy, when providing support.

Where an alternative HR Provider supports the School, the Provider must ensure that absence and leave-related workforce data required for statutory workforce monitoring is shared with the Local Authority in accordance with legal and governance duties.

Where a School does not buy into the Schools HR Advisory Service (LBBD) charges are likely to apply for any advice in relation to the Policy.

General Entitlement

The Head Teacher (or Designated Person) may authorise up to 3 days of discretionary leave per academic year, unless a separate entitlement is stated in the table (categories marked with *), which apply in addition to this discretionary provision. This is a discretionary provision and not an automatic entitlement.

Where statutory entitlements apply (including those introduced or amended by the Employment Rights Act 2025), these will take precedence over this discretionary provision.

Pro rata adjustments apply only where an employee works fewer hours within a working day than the standard school day. Employees who work fewer days per week but work full standard daily hours will not have their entitlement reduced.

This is a single combined maximum for discretionary leave, not a separate allowance per category.

Definitions

- *1 day* = the Employee's normal working hours (e.g. 2.5, 5, 7 hours)
- *1 week* = the Employee's normal working week.

Example

An Employee may take:

- 1 day for emergency time off for dependants,
- 1 day to accompany a partner to a hospital appointment, and
- 1 day to attend a funeral where they are not responsible for arrangements - reaching the **3-day** maximum for that academic year.

Some categories within this policy provide separate entitlements (for example, medical appointments or bereavement leave marked with *), which are not included within the 3-day discretionary limit.

Requests beyond the standard entitlement

Where a request would exceed the standard entitlement (such as, but not limited to, multiple bereavements in the same academic year), the Head Teacher or Governing Body will consider:

- the amount of leave requested;
- precedents within the School/Service;
- impact on service delivery and colleagues; and
- the Employee's overall attendance record.

Additional leave is not an entitlement and will only be approved where there is a clear and justifiable reason.

Nothing in this section limits or replaces any statutory right to time off or leave.

Decisions and the rationale for any additional leave granted or refused should be clearly recorded.

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Bereavement		
*	**Bereavement Leave for close family members**. (This may be used for grieving and/or arranging the funeral or to attend if being held abroad)	**Up to 10 days paid** leave in the case of serious/sudden illness or death of a close family member. *This includes child, husband, wife, civil partner, co-habiting partner, parent, brother/sister or another close family relative, and someone who has an in loco parentis relationship with the member of staff.*
*	**Statutory Parental Bereavement Leave (Jack's Law) for the death/loss of a child** under the age of 18, or a stillbirth from 24 weeks of pregnancy Note: Employees may still qualify for Maternity Leave, if their baby: • is born early • is stillborn after the start of the 24th week of pregnancy • dies after being born	**Up to 2 weeks paid leave** for the bereaved parent i.e., mother, father, husband, civil partner or co-habiting partner. Eligibility and any service/pay qualifying conditions will be applied in line with the statutory scheme in force at the time of the bereavement. Additional to time off to arrange and attend funeral above. Leave must be taken within 56 weeks of the child's death or still birth (in a block of 1 or 2 weeks or as 2 separate blocks of 1 week). **Up to 10 days unpaid** leave where the Employee is not entitled to Statutory Parental Bereavement Leave and pay.
*	**Bereavement Leave for a miscarriage before the 24th week of pregnancy**	**Up to 5 days paid leave** for the mother and husband or partner.
	Funeral of Colleague, Relative Or Close Friend	**1 day paid leave**. (Up to three days where the member of staff is making the arrangements). Where appropriate, Head Teachers should consider reasonable travel requirements when determining leave for funeral attendance, applying discretion based on individual circumstances.

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		Any additional time granted for travel purposes should be based on individual circumstances and considered on a case-by-case basis to ensure fairness and consistency across the School.
Emergencies		
	Emergency Time Off for Dependents Employees are entitled to reasonable time off to deal with an emergency involving a dependant. For operational clarity, the local authority defines reasonable paid time off in most circumstances as up to one day. This does not remove or limit an Employee's statutory rights under the Employment Rights Act 1996. This policy will be reviewed and updated to reflect changes in employment legislation (including amendments made by the Employment Rights Act 2025) and relevant ACAS guidance. Where changes affect locally agreed provisions, the Local Authority will consult and communicate changes as appropriate.	**Up to 1 day paid leave and 1-day unpaid** leave as agreed with Head Teacher i.e., maximum 2 days Paid time relates to the **day of the emergency** only; any additional time is normally unpaid. This right does **not** cover planned or known events (e.g. a pre-booked hospital appointment). **Examples:** • Qualifying: your child falls ill at School and must be collected and immediate care arranged. • Not qualifying: accompanying a child to a scheduled appointment that was known in advance. *This will also include supporting a family member who is transitioning.* *This does not apply for situations that Employees know about beforehand e.g., to accompany a child to a hospital appointment*.
Domestic Abuse		
*	**Employees Experiencing Domestic Abuse and for those seeking help to change their Abusive Behaviour.**	**Up to 10 days paid leave** Employees may take time off, including time spent at the workplace if this provides a safe environment, to access help and support. This may include: • Arranging accommodation or re-housing • Organising children's schooling • Managing financial arrangements • Contacting the Employee Assistance Programme • Seeking legal advice or attending court proceedings • Accessing counselling services • Reaching out to other support agencies

		This also includes time for Employees wanting to change their abusive behaviours by seeking help and support. Any additional time off in excess of 10 days will be unpaid and at the discretion of the Head Teacher.
Medical Appointments		
*	**General Medical Appointments (e.g., Doctor, Hospital, Dentist, Medical Screening, Fertility Treatments, Gender Re-Assignment, Transition) and Blood Donations**	**Up to 5 appointments with pay**, further appointments may be unpaid. Proof of appointments should be provided. **Note:** Employees are expected to arrange medical (Dental, GP, Hospital and Opticians' appointments) in their own time. Where appointments can only be arranged during normal working hours, they must make up the hours or take these as sickness absence. Each case will be considered on its merits – Head Teachers have the right to treat this as sickness absence and refer to the sickness absence management Policy.
	Leave to accompany a Near Relative/Partner/Close Friend To Doctor/Hospital	**1 appointment with pay** (only where there is a need for the patient to be accompanied and no-one else could reasonably be expected to accompany them)

Carers

Under the **Carer's Leave Act 2023**, all Employees have a day-one right to:

- Unpaid leave for up to 1 week per year to provide or arrange care for a dependant (who does not need to be a family member) with a long-term care need for someone who has:
    - a physical or mental illness or injury that means they're expected to need care for more than 3 months
    - a disability (as defined in the Equality Act 2010)
    - care needs because of their old age
- Can be taken in half-day or full-day blocks.
- No evidence required, only notice (minimum 3 days or twice the length of leave requested).
- Employers cannot refuse but may postpone for serious business reasons.

This statutory entitlement is in addition to the provisions below.

*	**Carers Assessment (of Adults over age 18)**	**Up to 1 day paid leave** for a Local Authority assessment of carers needs.
*	**Care for Adult Dependent**	**Up to 1-week unpaid Leave** to take a break from caring. For Employees who have caring responsibility for a partner or, relative or another adult living at the same address. **Up to 3 days paid leave** to care and look after the welfare of the adult for whom the Employee has caring responsibility. This may include accompanying them to medical or other appointments. Employee must produce Appointment Card/Letter
*	**Caring–Serious, Terminal or Life-Threatening Illness**	**Up to 1-week paid leave.** Any additional time off beyond 1 week will be unpaid. This provision applies where the employee is the principal carer for a child, partner, close relative or other adult dependant. Examples of illnesses include cancer, heart or other conditions, organ transplants, strokes, or critical accidents. If required, Employee must produce medical evidence stating the seriousness of the illness or accident.
	Redundancy	
*	**Time-off to look for work, (including job interviews)**	**Paid time off**, in accordance with Section 52 of the Employment Rights Act 1996, to attend interviews or arrange training for future employment. This statutory right applies regardless of the sector of the prospective new role. Redundancy cases only i.e. Employees issued notice of the termination of employment due to redundancy and who will have 2 years' service at the termination date.

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Personal Time off		
*	**Religious Festivals**	Employees may request up to 3 days per academic year for Religious Festivals or Observances. • One day is paid and is a policy entitlement. • Up to two additional days may be agreed at the Head Teacher's discretion, subject to the operational needs of the school. Where approved, these additional days may be paid or unpaid. Requests should be considered fairly and consistently and accommodated wherever reasonably possible.
	Moving House	**1 day paid leave** if it is not possible to arrange the move outside of term time.
	Significant Events	**1-day unpaid leave** for significant events which cannot take place in School holidays (e.g., weddings, graduation etc. of a near relative) Any additional time is to be granted at the discretion of the Head Teacher.
Jury Service		
*	**Leave for Jury Service**	Staff must give as much notice as possible. They will continue to be paid their salary as normal on the basis they repay any allowances for loss of earnings that can be claimed from Court
Public duties		
*	**School Governor**	**Up to 10 days paid leave.** This can be used to attend meetings or training arranged by Governor Services during normal working hours Any additional time off in excess of 10 days above, will be unpaid.

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*	**Member of a Public Body**	**Up to 10 days paid leave.** This includes Member of a local authority, statutory tribunal, police authority, board of prison visitors or a prison visiting committee, relevant education body. Any additional time off in excess of 10 days above, will be unpaid.
Service in Non-Regular Forces		
*	**Reserved Services and Cadet Force Adult Volunteers**	**Up to 2 weeks paid leave** to attend annual training/camp courses. Any additional time off will be unpaid. **Up to 1 day paid leave** to participate in the annual (Armed Forces) Reserves Day. **Unpaid** leave as required for active duty.
Career breaks / Sabbaticals		
*	**Career Breaks / Sabbaticals** Please see guidance on Career/sabbatical breaks.	Between a minimum 3 months up to a maximum 18 months' **unpaid Leave.** This must be approved by the Head Teacher and Chair of Governors. Where agreed subject to the operational needs of the service, a career break may be considered to: • care for children or other dependents; • undertake further education or unpaid career • development training; • take an extended holiday; • fulfil other outside commitments e.g., volunteering or community work; • when appointed on approved national training programme e.g., "Step Up to Social Work". Employees must have completed 2 years continuous service with the Authority at the time of applying.

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	Sick Leave and Pay	
*	**Sick Pay Entitlement** Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) will be administered in accordance with current legislation (including any amendments introduced by the Employment Rights Act 2025) and will apply where it provides a higher entitlement than contractual provisions.	**Teachers**: please see Burgundy book for further guidance **Support Staff:** please see Green book for further guidance
	Trade Union Duties and Activities	
*	**Teaching Trade Unions** **Applies to: NEU, NASUWT, NAHT, ASCL**	**Time-Off** May be provided for: • Collective bargaining and consultation on employment matters • Representation at formal meetings (e.g., grievance, disciplinary, capability) • Attendance at recognised training courses • Duties as Union Learning Representatives • Attendance at approved national or regional conferences (subject to prior discussion with the Headteacher) **Note:** Facility time arrangements are funded centrally through the SLA and are allocated in accordance with overall union membership and locally agreed arrangements. The use of facility time will be managed in a way that supports effective representation while balancing the operational needs of the school. **Unpaid Time-Off** Reasonable unpaid time off may be requested for: • Attending union branch or regional meetings • Voting in union elections • Accessing union learning services • Attendance at Annual General Meetings (unless otherwise agreed)

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		• Meeting with full-time union officers (where not linked to formal consultation) **Working Arrangements / Conditions** • Requests for time-off should be made with as much notice as reasonably practicable and will normally be agreed, subject to the operational needs of the school. • Schools and Trade Union representatives will work collaboratively to ensure appropriate use of time off and minimise disruption to pupils' learning. • A record of agreed time-off will be maintained in line with Local Authority requirements to support statutory reporting and transparency. • Representatives are expected to act in accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct and agreed protocols.
*	**Support Staff Trade Unions** **Applies to: GMB, Unison, Unite**	**Paid Time-off** May be provided for: • Collective bargaining and consultation on employment matters • Representation at formal meetings (e.g., grievance, disciplinary, capability) • Attendance at recognised training courses • Duties as Union Learning Representatives • Attendance at approved national or regional conferences (subject to prior discussion with the Headteacher) **Note:** Facility time arrangements are determined in line with union membership and locally agreed arrangements. The use of facility time will be managed in a way that supports effective representation whilst balancing the operational needs of the school. **Unpaid Time-off** Reasonable unpaid time off may be requested for: • Attending Trade Union branch or regional meetings • Voting in Trade Union elections • Accessing union learning services • Attendance at Annual General Meetings (unless otherwise agreed)

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		• Meeting with full-time Trade Union officers (where not linked to formal consultation) **Working Arrangements / Conditions** • Requests for time-off should be submitted with as much notice as reasonably practicable and will normally be agreed, subject to the operational needs of the school. • Schools and Trade Union representatives will work collaboratively to ensure the appropriate use of time off and to minimise disruption to service delivery and pupils' learning. • A record of agreed time-off will be maintained in line with Local Authority requirements to support transparency and statutory reporting. • Representatives are expected to act in accordance with Council policies and the Code of Conduct.
Maternity/Paternity/Neo-Natal/Parental / Adoption Leave		
*	**Maternity/Paternity/Neo-Natal/Parental Leave/Adoption Leave & Pay**	The Local Authority has a separate guidance for Teaching and Support Staff. **That guidance (and any associated procedures) will be applied so as to meet at least the statutory minimum entitlements in force at the relevant time, including any changes introduced by the Employment Rights Act 2025 and related regulations.**
*	**Ante-Natal Care - Pregnant Employees**	Pregnant Employees are entitled to **paid** time off to attend ante-natal appointments. • Proof of the appointment (e.g., appointment card or letter) must be provided. • This entitlement applies only to the pregnant Employee, not their partner**.**
*	**Ante-Natal Care – Accompanying a Pregnant Partner**	Employees who are the baby's father, the expectant mother's spouse or civil partner, or a partner in an enduring relationship may take up to **2 appointments unpaid** to accompany the expectant mother to ante-natal appointments. Employees must confirm in writing: • The date and time of the appointment • Their qualifying relationship

		• That the time off is for attending an ante-natal appointment on the advice of a registered medical practitioner, nurse, or midwife
Fostering		
*	**For Employees who are Fostering for Barking and Dagenham only**	**Up to 1 day paid leave**, during the Employee's assessment for approval to becoming a foster parent. **Up to 5 days paid leave**, when the Employee is caring for a foster child (e.g., to attend meetings in relation to their fostering role), or at the start of a planned permanent placement. Employee must produce appointment card/letter. Any additional time will be unpaid.

Other types of Leave		
*	**Access to Work Assessment**	**Paid leave for duration of appointment**. To attend Access to Work (ATW) Assessment for reasonable adjustments.
*	**Access to Work Training**	**Paid leave for duration of training** – to be agreed as part of the ATW assessment. To attend training agreed and funded by ATW for reasonable adjustments.
*	**Awaiting Reasonable Adjustments**	**Paid leave** to be agreed with the Head Teacher (or Designated Person). When Employee cannot work as waiting for agreed reasonable adjustments to be put in place – temporary home working may also be an option.
*	**Disability – Medical Screening/Tests**	**Paid leave** to be agreed with The Head Teacher (or Designated Person) Each case to be considered on its merits – travelling and waiting could take up a large part of the day and the individuals may respond differently to treatment and/or be unable to return to work that day.

		Employee must produce appointment card/letter. Applies to someone with a specific condition as a disability (See **appendix 1** of the Schools Sickness Absence Policy)
*	**Other Medical Treatment/ Rehabilitation**	**Paid leave** to be agreed with The Head Teacher (or Designated Person) ; Each case to be considered on its merits - travelling and waiting could take up a large part of the day and the individuals may respond differently to treatment and/or be unable to return to work that day. The Head Teacher (or Designated Person) has the right to treat this as sickness absence e.g. Employees will not be allowed to take 2 weeks paid special leave for post operative recovery instead of certified sickness absence. Employee must produce appointment card/letter – to attend for treatment specific to disability e.g. chemotherapy and post-operative recovery, or counselling.
*	**Other Reasonable Adjustments**	**Unpaid and/or Paid** leave to be agreed with the Head Teacher (or Designated Person). Employee must produce appointment card/ letter – to attend training for reasonable adjustments e.g. guide/hearing dogs.