

..... **SCHOOL**

Model Staff Leave and Absence Policy

..... School recognises and values the contribution of each member of staff to the education of the children in the school.

High levels of absence among teaching and support staff pose a serious problem for a school in terms of disruption to teaching programmes, pupils' learning and other areas of the school's work. The governing body is committed to managing attendance so that any disruption to the pupils' education or the effective running of the school is minimised. Equally it recognises that during the course of employment, colleagues will occasionally be absent from work through ill health, maternity and other authorised circumstances.

Absence of any staff employed in schools during term time means some impact on the children's education. Therefore, requests from any member of staff for absence to be taken during term time must be regarded by all as the exception. Requests for leave of absence for the purpose of taking holidays and/or contributing to holidays will not be granted.

This policy gives details of entitlements of members of staff in relation to absence. Part-time staff will have the entitlement for leave from work reduced in proportion to the percentage of time they work.

Seeking Approval for Leave from Work

All staff will be required to follow the School's procedures for requesting leave of absence and for reporting absence.

Authorised paid and unpaid absence from work for the reasons given in this policy requires prior approval.

Requests for paid or unpaid leave must be made in writing to the headteacher with full reasons for the request. Requests by the headteacher should go to the Chair of Governors. The request should be made as soon as it is known that it will be required, and in any case not less than one full week in advance of the proposed absence, except in exceptional circumstance such as the death of a family member.

The Governing Body has given delegated authority to the Headteacher to approve leave of absence requests for up to days. For anything greater the Headteacher must discuss each case with the Chair of the Staffing and Personnel Committee, or his/her representative, and act on the recommendation made.

Requests for leave of absence will be considered taking into account

- the principles of this policy,
- the best interests of the children and the school,
- treating staff in a fair, reasonable and consistent way,
- national and local terms and conditions of employment.

Where the agreements refer to relatives of the first degree, this is taken to mean -

husband/wife, permanent partner, brother/sister, parent and child or the corresponding relatives-in-law. Additionally the Governing Body has decided to include grandparents or other relatives/carers who have taken on the main caring role or people who are not related but occupying a similar position in the family.

Dental and medical appointments

It is expected that dental and medical appointments will be made out of school hours wherever possible. It is recognised that in some circumstance, such as an appointment being expected from a hospital, that this may not always be possible. However, appointments in work time should be kept to a minimum and cause as little disruption as possible.

Emergencies involving dependants

All employees have the right to take a reasonable period of unpaid time off during working hours to deal with an emergency involving a dependant. A dependant is defined as a spouse, partner, child or parent, or someone who lives with the employee as part of his/her family, i.e. not someone who lives in the house as an employee, tenant, lodger or boarder. In the case of illness, injury or where care arrangements break down, a dependant may also be someone who reasonably relies on the employee for assistance. This may be where the employee is the primary carer or is the only person who can help in an emergency.

Parental Leave

Members of staff with at least one year's continuous service with Devon County Council are entitled to parental leave. It is applicable to parents of children born or adopted after 15th December 1999 or children under five on 15th December 1999 and is only available for the purpose of caring for a child for whom the employee has parental responsibility. It is applicable until the child's fifth birthday or, in the case of adoption, until five years have elapsed following placement or the child reaches 18 (whichever is the sooner).

Parental leave is unpaid and the maximum entitlement is 13 weeks leave (pro rata for part-time staff) for each child, in total. The leave must be taken in blocks or multiples of one week and the maximum entitlement in any leave year is 4 weeks.

If an employee has a disabled child for whom disability living allowance is awarded s/he can claim an extra 5 weeks' leave in addition to the 13 to make a total of 18 weeks. Parents of disabled children are able to use their leave over a longer period, up until the child's 18th birthday and may take the leave a day at a time, if required

The employee must give at least 21 days written notice of the period during which parental leave is requested.

If a father wishes to take parental leave following the birth of a child (in addition to paternity leave), he is required to give at least 21 days' notice to his employer, stating the **expected** week of commencement of the parental leave and the duration of that leave.

In the case of adoption, a parent must give at least 21 days notice stating the week in which he/she **expects** to adopt the child. The duration of the leave must also be stated.

Prior to approving the first request for parental leave the school will need to see the birth certificate, adoption paper or proof of disability living allowance.

The governing body is able to require an employee to postpone his/her parental leave for up to 6 months, where the school cannot cope. Notice of postponement will be given no more than 7 days after the request and will state the reasons for postponing the parental leave and when it can be taken. The leave must be granted for the same period as the original request and will begin on a date determined by the headteacher, after consultation with the member of staff and be not more than 6 months after the date originally requested.

Parental leave cannot be postponed when the member of staff gives notice of parental leave to be taken immediately after the birth of their child or at the time of adoption.

The school will accurately record when an employee takes Parental Leave as new employers may seek a declaration of how much Parental Leave has been taken.