

# Oaks Park High School

<b>Title of Policy:</b>	<b>Staff Special Leave of Absence</b>
<b>Person responsible:</b>	<b>J Hamill</b>
<b>Date for review:</b>	<b>2019</b>

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**This policy has been adopted by Governors and should be read alongside two other key policies relating to staff absence:**

- Sickness Absence.
- Leave of Absence.

## **1. Purpose**

The general principle of this policy is to ensure that special leave/time off should be taken during school holiday periods. We recognise that there may be occasions when this is impractical, therefore this policy sets out the principles to be applied when addressing situations where discretion may be exercised by the Headteacher, Governors or nominated members of the school Leadership Team. This Policy does not set out to address every conceivable type of request, but the principles will be used whenever appropriate.

Some types of leave are governed by different sources, such as:

- Terms of Employment, eg. sickness and annual leave.
- Statutory regulations such as maternity leave and pay and the right to return to work.
- Codes of Practice and similar sources, eg. time off for trade union duties or activities.
- School Policies.

## **2. Application**

The principles of this Policy apply to:

- all staff employed by the school (unless specified otherwise);
- any individual seconded to the school or based at the school for a significant period of time and for whom the legal employer has agreed that the principles should apply.

## **3. General Principles**

Staff are not expected to take leave and/or special time off during school holidays unless there are exceptional circumstances (this excludes Long Service Days). This also applies to staff on 52 week contracts, unless agreed differently with the Headteacher.

**Some staff are required to work during the holidays. It will therefore be possible for them to take some leave during term time; however this must be agreed in advance with the Headteacher and must not impact on the education of students or the efficient operation of the school. It will not be possible to make overtime payments to cover staff who take leave during term time.**

- (a) It is recognised that occasionally an individual may need to take time off during working hours or to fulfil parent/carer responsibilities. In these circumstances the school will strive to operate a give and take policy [see section 4(c)].
- (b) If time off during the working week is unavoidable, eg. medical and other appointments, it should be arranged, if reasonably practicable:

- outside of school hours;
  - during non-contact time with students or non-examination groups, as appropriate.
- (c) When considering requests for special time off, especially during term time, managers will also take into account:
- the service needs of the school (however managers will try to balance these with the needs of the individual, if reasonably practicable);
  - the amount of time off an individual has taken for sickness, unauthorised absence, etc. This may affect the decision and/or conditions attached to the decision;
  - affordability (which could vary from year to year).
- (d) In all special absence cases, individuals are expected to make advance requests to allow proper consideration. In urgent situations where advance notice is not practicable, individuals must contact the school by 7:30 am on the first day of absence to explain the situation and the anticipated duration of the absence.
- (e) If an informal discussion does not resolve the issue, any dispute or grievance concerning a request for time off or payment during time off should be dealt with through the School Grievance Procedure.

#### 4. Annual Leave and Sickness Absence

##### (a) Annual Leave

- Annual Leave is set out in the Terms of Employment.
- All staff may be required to keep an individual record of their statutory minimum leave entitlement.
- Support staff are expected to take their annual leave during school holiday periods. Carry forward of annual leave to the next leave year will not normally be approved. However, in exceptional circumstances advance requests may be agreed by the Headteacher, **but will be limited to a maximum of 5 days and must be taken prior to 31st May of the new leave year. If approved, part time staff may carry forward a pro rata amount of leave.**

##### (b) Sickness Absence

- The conditions are set out in the relevant Terms of Employment.
- All staff are required to notify the school of absence within the time limits and manner set out in the school Sickness Absence Policy.
- Self and medical certificates must be provided by the respective deadlines.
- An individual may be required to participate in a return to work interview on the first day back to work or as soon as practicable thereafter.

##### (c) Special Leave

###### **Balancing the needs of the school and the individual:**

As noted in the general principles above, we would hope to adopt a flexible approach. **Many staff work beyond their contracted hours and/or are flexible in the times/days they attend. In recognition of this, requests for special leave will be considered if it is reasonably practicable to do so.**

Requests will be based on:

- the willingness of individual staff to cover colleagues;
- the personal circumstances facing the individual;
- sufficient advance notice being given to arrange cover etc.;
- the individual's record of attendance to date.

Examples of such time off would be:

- Attending a child's school play.
- Attending a parental meeting arranged during the school day.

It will be at the Headteacher's discretion whether such time will:

- need to be made up (using the Cover Bank);
- be taken as time off in lieu for extra hours previously worked;
- be taken with or without pay or a mixture of both.

## **5. Long Service Days**

A number of staff take Long Service Days during the year and it is essential that these days are managed to ensure that there is no detrimental impact on the school. It is therefore important to note the following:

- Long Service Days should not be blocked together.
- Long Service Days are booked at least 5 days in advance.
- Staff entitled to 4 Long Service Days per year should take 1 Long Service Day per term, with the 4<sup>th</sup> day being taken during one of the terms.
- There will be a maximum number of 3 staff out on Long Service Days at any one time. There is also likely to be a limit of 1 member of staff per day from different areas.
- Where there is a limit applied to the number of staff allowed out on any one day, leave will normally be allocated on a first come, first served basis.