

Special leave policy

special paid & unpaid leave for staff members



1. Introduction

The Governing Body of Bigland Green recognises that the success of the school depends upon the contribution of all staff and gives full acknowledgement that a fair and effective special leave policy contributes to the maintenance of staff morale, good work-life balance and thereby to the success of the school.

Employees of the school are **not automatically entitled to any leave during term-time, unpaid or paid**. All leave granted are at the discretion of the school for which this policy, based on the LBTH policy, will be used as a guideline.

The Governing Body recognises that absence from duty by staff may occur for a wide variety of reasons including compassionate grounds, public services or for personal/family emergencies¹. The Governing Body will observe its statutory obligations which include:

- paid time off for ante-natal care under section 55 of the Employment Rights Act 1996, as part of the provisions for maternity leave;
- unpaid time off for parental leave, dependants and domestic emergencies, and;
- time off for trade union duties in accordance with provisions in Section 61 and 62 of the Employment Rights Act 1996 or for other recognised public duties.

Request for all leave, unpaid or paid, must be submitted in writing at least **7 working** days in advance to the Headteacher. Exceptions will only apply to emergencies. The special leave entitlement calculation will be based on the **past 12 months**.

2. Leave requested in special circumstances

Applications for exceptional leave should be made to the Headteacher using a request form available from the school office as soon as the need to be absent is known. In an emergency an email or telephone call can be made.

In dealing with requests for leave of absence in special circumstances the Headteacher will apply the principles set out below:

- the cost to the school of the leave in terms of salary, cover arrangements and organisational disruption, and;
- the circumstances of the individual including previous paid and unpaid leave granted relative to the period of employment.

Below are some examples of paid and unpaid leave but the list is non-exhaustive and the Headteacher may exercise discretion up to the limits described in this policy. The Headteacher may consult the Chair of Governors to seek advice on particular requests not covered in this policy.

Routine dentist/optician – appointments should be made in employees own time.

Doctor/hospital appointment – up to 0.5 day paid leave may be granted to attend appointments that cannot be made at other times – anything more will be unpaid. When possible, appointments should be made outside working hours. Part-time employees should aim to attend appointment at their own time.

¹ This 'special leave of absence policy' does not cover absence due to personal illness or injury as they are covered by the sickness procedures operated by London Borough of Tower Hamlets, 2020

Attending routine appointments for own or adopted children – these should be organised outside working hours or will be unpaid.

Paid special leave

Reasons for special leave	Max. days	Reasons for special leave (at the discretion of headteacher)	Max. days
Emergency care of a child or other dependent family member	1 to 3 days	Other compassionate leave not covered in this policy	5 days
Compassionate leave in respect of the death and the funeral of a significant other or close relative	1 to 3 days	Attending a wedding, degree or honour ceremony of a significant other ²	1 day
Domestic emergencies	1 day	Study or examination linked to staff CPD	1 day
Attendance as witness or for jury services or approved public service	As required	Interviews for posts in education ³	4 half days

Unpaid special leave

Reasons for special leave	Max. days
Any of the above paid leave or similar situation requiring more than the maximum days allowed may be requested as unpaid by the employee.	Discretionary
Anything which reasonably could not have been scheduled for a non-working day or planned closure.	

3. Secondments/extended unpaid leave

The Headteacher will make a recommendation to the Resources Committee of the Governing Body for any secondment or extended unpaid leave. The recommendation, if not acceptable to the employee, will be accompanied by a written statement from the employee of their request, with reasons. The Committee will discuss and decide on the merits of each case.

The Headteacher will keep a record of all leave granted under this policy which will be reviewed by governors as and when necessary.

Date Approved	Signature of Chair	Next Review
February 2024	<i>B. A. Pailola</i>	As required

² Paid leave can only be considered with a minimum of two years continuous service with the school. All paid/unpaid leave is at the discretion of the headteacher as stated in the model LA policy.

³ This limitation does not apply where the employee is redundant. The maximum allocation stated is for staff who have been at the school for at least five years or more. For others it will be proportionate and at the discretion of the headteacher.