

Policy Title:	Time Off Policy
Version:	1.2
Member of Staff Responsible:	Chief Executive Officer
Status:	Statutory
Date adopted by governing body:	16 March 2026
Date for review:	March 2028
Date reviewed:	13 July 2022 18 March 2024
Reviewed:	Bi-annually

Change Record		
Version	Date	Description
1.1	18/03/24	Section 3 addition of Carers leave following the implementation of the Carers Leave Act on 6 th April 2024 Section 21 addition of leave of absence for religious observance section
1.2	16/03/26	Addition of Work Break section
1.3		
1.4		
1.5		

Primitas Learning Partnership promotes the safeguarding and welfare of all children in its care; all policies are developed and formulated with this in mind

1. Scope of Policy

- 1.1 This policy applies to employees of Primitas Learning Partnership, referred to in this policy as colleagues.
- 1.2 The policy and procedure applies to all colleagues, regardless of length of service, but does not form part of the contract of employment and can be varied from time to time. The procedure does not apply once you have left the employer.
- 1.3 It is important to note that, in Academies which have TOIL arrangements for Associate staff and Friendly Cover Arrangements for teaching staff, these can be used to cover instances of unpaid leave for partial days of absence at the Headteachers discretion.
- 1.4 i) In this policy, **A close/immediate family member** refers to:
- spouse/partner
 - parent(s)
 - in-law(s)
 - child(ren)
 - grandparent(s)
 - sibling(s)
 - other family member(s) with whom the employee has a close relationship and/or regular contact.
- ii) **A dependent** is defined as *a close/immediate family member, whom it is reasonable to assume relies on you for assistance*. This may be where you are the primary carer or you are the only person who can help in an emergency e.g. an elderly relative living independently or in supported accommodation

2. Compassionate Leave (Paid)

- 2.1 Compassionate leave may be granted in certain circumstances of urgent domestic distress.
- 2.2 You can request to take up to five days paid absence (pro-rated for part-time staff) when a dependant:
- has a serious illness or experiences an event of severe trauma;
 - is unexpectedly taken to hospital and you are solely or substantially responsible for making the necessary arrangements;
 - dies and you are solely or substantially responsible for making the necessary arrangements;
- 2.3 The entitlement (full or pro-rated days) can be taken as single days as circumstances dictate.

3. Carers Leave (unpaid)

- Carers leave may be granted to all employees who have a dependent with a **long-term care need** (a physical or mental illness or injury which is likely to require care for more than 3 months). Carers leave supports employees who want to be absent from work to provide or arrange care for that dependent. Carers leave is unpaid and a right from day one of employment.
- 3.1 Employees can request to take up to one week carers's leave (pro rated for part time staff e.g. equivalent to one working week), per year over a 12 month rolling period . The leave may be taken in a block or as individual days, but the minimum period that can be taken as carer's leave is half a working day.
- 3.2 Notice of the employee's request to take carer's leave must be provided and the period of notice required is twice the length of the time that is being requested as leave, or three days before the start of the leave, whichever is the earliest.
- 3.3 A Carer's leave request cannot be refused but it may be postponed:
- Where the Academy/school reasonably believes that the operation of the Academy/school would be unduly disrupted

- The employee must be allowed to take the requested leave within a month of their original request.
- the Academy/school must provide a written notice of postponement within 7 days of the original request, which states the reason for the postponement and provides the revised dates the employee can take carer's leave.

4. Medical Appointments

- 4.1 Routine GP/dental appointments should, wherever possible, be arranged to take place outside of working hours. Where this is not possible, paid leave will be granted at the discretion of the Headteacher. The Headteacher has the right to check that the booking of after-school appointments have been attempted before granting paid leave.
- 4.2 Hospital and Consultant Appointments for Staff - These will be paid and staff are encouraged to keep them and not delay them by trying to re-arrange such appointments out of working hours.
- 4.3 Dependents: Planned leave due to routine medical or dental appointments for dependents will be unpaid, unless Friendly Cover Arrangements can be implemented for teaching staff (Appendix 1) and accrued TOIL used for Associate Staff. Hospital and Consultant appointments which can only be taken during the school day are paid at the discretion of the Headteacher.
- 4.4 Employee: for hospital and consultant appointments for staff which can only be taken during working hours, paid leave will be granted upon proof of scheduled appointment, dependent upon circumstances, at the discretion of the Headteacher.

5. Child Care – emergency time off to care for dependents

On occasion you may need to take time off work because your child is too ill to go to school, they cannot look after themselves at home and there is no appropriate adult to care for them. In this instance, you will be paid for the first day of absence but any subsequent days will be unpaid. If the person who has shared parental responsibility is in employment, the expectation is that such short term emergency leave should be shared fairly and proportionately. If time off for child care occurs too frequently or there is doubt over the extent to which alternative care arrangements have been attempted or considered, then the first day of carer-leave may be unpaid. Such decisions will be at the discretion of the Headteacher.

6. Moving House

Staff are encouraged, if at all possible, to make arrangements to move house during school closure periods. However, if this proves impossible, staff will be granted one day of paid leave at the discretion of the Headteacher. The Headteacher is permitted to ask for documentation relating to why the move could not take place during a school closure period.

7. Weddings

Paid leave will be granted for the wedding day of a close/immediate family member at the discretion of the Headteacher. Unpaid leave will be granted for the wedding day of other relatives or close friends at the discretion of the Headteacher. A further day of leave may be agreed, at the discretion of the Headteacher, to account for travelling time and overnight stay, if necessary, but this will be unpaid.

8. Funerals

Staff are entitled to one day's paid leave to attend the funeral of a close/immediate family member or close friend. Staff may request leave to attend the funeral of someone other than a close/immediate family member but this is at the Headteacher's discretion. This will be unpaid. Staff are also entitled to up to 5 days of paid compassionate leave following the bereavement of a close/immediate family member, if you

are too traumatised to attend work and/or if you have substantial responsibility for making any necessary arrangements; this will be at the discretion of the Headteacher.

9. Graduation Ceremony/Moving to University

- 9.1 Staff are entitled to one day's paid leave for attendance at a child or partner's graduation ceremony. For other close/immediate family members it will be unpaid.
- 9.2 Staff are encouraged to take their children to university at weekends. However, if this is not possible, staff are entitled to one day's unpaid leave, at the Headteacher's discretion.

10. Recruitment

Staff may be granted leave to visit another school prior to submitting an employment application, but this is at the discretion of the Headteacher. Staff are entitled to one day's paid leave to attend an interview in any 12 month period. Attendance at further interviews may be granted as paid or unpaid at the Headteacher's discretion. Staff may be granted leave to attend an induction day at a new school.

11. Other Significant Family Reasons

There are certain other circumstances where leave for a partial day will be granted, at the discretion of the Headteacher, if it is for *family reasons of significant importance and value*. Examples of valid family reasons of significance include:

- Attending an open morning/afternoon with your child in a prospective new school/college/University.
- Attending another important meeting at your child's school regarding their education.
- Attending a special event in your child's school, which involves your child, such as a nativity play or leavers' event.
- Attending a ceremony for an award/honour that a close/immediate family member has won.
- Watching a close/immediate family member participate in elite activity involving sports or the arts.
- Attending an audition/rehearsal/trials with a dependent.
- Attending a routine medical/dental appointment with a dependent (as mentioned in **Medical Appointments for Dependents**, above.)

It is important to note that, in Academies which have TOIL arrangements for Associate Staff and Friendly Cover Arrangements for Teaching Staff, these could be used to grant paid leave in these circumstances at the Headteacher's discretion.

12. Time off for Emergencies and domestic incidents (unpaid)

- 12.1 You might find that you have to deal with an emergency concerning a dependent for which you need to be absent from work but for which paid leave is not available. A reasonable amount of unpaid leave will be granted to deal with these emergencies at the discretion of the Headteacher.
- 12.2 You might find that you have to deal with an emergency concerning a domestic issue or vehicle emergency for which you need to be absent from work but for which paid leave is not available. A reasonable amount of unpaid leave will be granted to deal with these emergencies at the discretion of the Headteacher.

13. Time Off For Public Duties

- 13.1 This covers time off for:
- Public duties
 - Courts – justices of the peace, jury service, witnesses
 - Reserve forces and peace-time emergencies
 - Elections

- Representative Sport

13.2 The Trust allows colleagues to take time off for the public duties detailed within this policy document in accordance with the guidelines given.

Where an allowance is claimable for loss of earnings, colleagues should claim and pay the allowance to The Trust. All absences will be subject to service needs and must be agreed in advance by the employee's Headteacher.

13.3 *Amount of Time Off for Public Duties:*

13.4 If the Headteacher is satisfied that time off will not be detrimental to the Academy, colleagues may be granted:

- i) as a justice of the peace or member of a local authority:
 - up to 18 days and 36 half days paid leave – which may be calculated on an hourly basis, subject to the total number of hours taken not exceeding the hourly equivalent of 18 days;
 - and**
 - up to 35 days or 70 half days without pay, which must be taken as full or half days, i.e. may not be calculated on an hourly basis.
- ii) for other public duties listed in the Employment Rights Act 1996 which do not include duties as a JP or member of a local authority:
 - 9 full days or 18 half days with pay which may be calculated on an hourly basis, subject to the total number of hours taken not exceeding the hourly equivalent of 9 days;
 - and**
 - 9 full days or 18 half days without pay, which must be taken as full or half days i.e. may not be calculated on an hourly basis.

Those eligible to claim under both of the above schemes may only claim up to 208 hours in total.
Or

A member of a non-political organisation on a list approved by the County Council, whose principal objects include the improvement of the standards of local government services but whose objects do not include the remuneration, status, conditions of service or conditions of employment of colleagues

- examiner for a university, college, or other examining board or bodies *

*Examiners and lecturers are allowed to keep any fees received from the appropriate bodies in respect of these duties

14. Jury Service

14.1 Where a colleague receives a summons to serve on a jury, they should report that fact immediately to their Headteacher and Manager. Leave of absence will be granted unless an exemption is secured. Although not obliged under law, paid leave of absence will be granted to colleagues undertaking jury and other public service.

This means that the employee will receive their normal pay and will not be able to make a claim to the court for loss of earnings.

14.2 If an employee attends court as a witness but they are not required for a half day or full day, they should return to the workplace. If they do not return to work, this will be considered an unauthorised absence and the employee will not be paid for this time.

15. Witnesses

15.1 Colleagues called to be witnesses, defendants, or plaintiffs, for Primitas Learning Partnership or any individual academy will be granted paid leave to attend court. Time off with pay will not be granted in respect of cases personal to the employee, but Headteachers should facilitate availability to attend court.

- 15.2 If an employee attends court as a witness but they are not required for a particular day, they should return to the workplace on that day. If they do not return to work, this will be considered an unauthorised absence and the employee will not be paid for this time.
- 16. Reserve Forces**
- 16.1 Members of reserved forces will be released on paid leave to meet government requirements and on return they will be entitled to return to the job in which they were employed, unless that is not practicable, in which case they have the right to return to a job that is both suitable and appropriate. Requests for time off to volunteer where there is no compulsory mobilisation will be considered on a case by case basis. Specific advice should be sought from Primitas HR on an individual basis.
- 16.2 Volunteer Reservists may be required to undertake training for up to 16 days per annum. This is usually undertaken on Saturdays and Sundays. The onus is on the employee to arrange for training to be undertaken in off-duty time. Where this is not possible, paid leave may be granted, at the Headteacher's discretion for mutually acceptable dates for this absence.
- 16.3 Colleagues in the Territorial Army and Volunteer Reserve who are required to attend annual camp are allowed the two weeks as additional leave with pay.
- 17. Peace – Time Emergencies**
- Colleagues who are called upon to assist at a peace-time emergency under emergency planning schemes (e.g. scientific advisers, members of Red Cross or St. John Ambulance) will be granted leave of absence with pay for such duty.
- 18. Elections**
- 18.1 One day's leave of absence without pay (the polling day) will be granted to a colleague who contests a local election
- 18.2 Colleagues who stand as candidates at a General Election or a European Election will be granted leave of absence without pay for the period from nomination day to polling day inclusive.
- 18.3 Leave of absence without pay from nomination day to polling day inclusive will be granted to colleagues acting as Parliamentary Agents.
- 19 Party Political Conferences**
- Leave of absence is **not** granted to colleagues to enable them to attend party political conferences.
- 20. Representative Sport**
- SLT members/School Governing Bodies have discretion to grant leave with or without pay to colleagues who are selected to represent their county or country in representative sport. If it is "professional" sport, leave will be without pay.
- 21. Leave of absence for religious observance**
- You may request unpaid time off work to attend religious festivals, pilgrimages, time off for prayer or may request an adjustment to your working time to accommodate periods of fasting or requirements to cease work by a particular time using the form. Requests for time off will be considered sympathetically and on a case by case basis, taking into account the needs of the school, students and surrounding circumstances. You should request time off at the beginning of the school year if possible, otherwise as soon as possible, so that plans for covering your absence can be made in good time.

22. Accountabilities

- 22.1 Colleagues are responsible for:
- Submitting applications for time off in the prescribed manner, and for claiming loss of earnings allowances wherever possible.
 - Discussing with the Headteacher the circumstances surrounding the need to take time off as compassionate/emergency Leave.
- 22.2 The Headteacher is responsible for considering applications for time off in accordance with service and legal requirements, the needs of the Academy and within the policies set by the Trust Board.

23. How to Apply

- 23.1 In all circumstances including emergency leave requests you should, as soon as is practicable, complete a Staff Absence Request Form and discuss, with the Headteacher, the circumstances surrounding your need for time off.
- 23.2 The Headteacher will consider all such requests carefully and sympathetically taking into account the individual situation and complete the details on the Staff Absence Request Form. When considering a request, the Headteacher may request documentary evidence from you in support of your request. As well as determining whether the absence should be paid or unpaid, the Headteacher may turn down the request.
- 23.3 If leave is refused the Headteacher will explain carefully the reasons for turning down the request. The most common reason for refusal is the frequency of absence from the Academy, which is beginning to impact on the individual's capability to fulfil their role effectively.
- 23.4 A confidential record of request for leave of absence and whether or not the request was granted will be maintained.
- 23.5 Unpaid leave of absence will be calculated using the employee's hourly rate. Deductions from payroll for unpaid leave will be made as soon after the period of leave as is practicable however this may not be in the month the leave was taken due to payroll administration deadlines.

24. Work Break

The work break scheme provides teachers and Associate staff with the opportunity to take a planned period of time off work to concentrate on alternative personal priorities and are self-funded. The primary purpose is to offer employees the flexibility to more easily combine family commitments with work, but this also extends to other personal commitments such as travel, study, professional development or voluntary work.

It should be noted that there is no contractual right to take a work break and each individual request will be considered on a case-by-case basis by their Headteacher.

- 24.1 **Eligibility** - Work break applies to permanent employees currently at work* with a minimum of five years' continuous satisfactory service with PLP regardless of grade or occupation and subject to agreement from your Headteacher.
(* the provisions of the work break procedure also apply to those currently on maternity, adoption, paternity, parental bereavement leave or shared parental leave).

Satisfactory service will be defined as service where:

- there is no current (i.e. unspent) disciplinary action/sanction against the employee and/or
- there is no current formal action against the employee under the Capability or Sickness Absence

Policies.

It is unlikely that a second application would be considered within 5 years of a previous work break having commenced.

These provisions are not applicable to colleagues on temporary contracts.

- 24.2 **Duration** The work break will last for a minimum of three calendar months and a maximum of one calendar year and will effectively be a period of unpaid leave. There is no requirement for the employee to resign from their position unless they subsequently decide not to return at the end of their work break.

Where circumstances permit, the employee's position may be filled on a temporary basis until such time as the work break comes to an end.

At the end of the work break period, the employee does not have an automatic right of return to the role they occupied prior to taking the work break. If the substantive post is no longer available, the employer will make best endeavours to find a suitable alternative role. If this is not possible, normal redeployment and consultation arrangements will be adhered to.

When deciding whether to agree to a work break, the Headteacher must consider the feasibility of recruiting a suitable individual to fill the post on a temporary basis whilst the work break is in progress.

During the work break the employee has a responsibility to keep their professional skills and knowledge up to date.

Taking time off on a work break will have an impact on an employee's occupational pension entitlements.

In addition, an agreement may be made between both the employer and employee as part of the work break arrangement (where feasible), for the employee to work up to 10 days paid work for the employer, in order to help the individual to maintain their skills. The 10 days paid work will be casual/supply work paid at the point on the pay scale applicable at the beginning of the work break. The 10 days paid work will allow contact between the employee and their Headteacher to be maintained and to help to maintain up-to-date skills. The employee may, from time to time, be invited to join in with relevant training events.

Payment applicable for days worked will be paid at the end of the work break period. Payment will be paid for actual hours worked. The employer has no automatic right to require the employee to carry out any work and the employee has no automatic right to undertake any work during the work break.

- 24.3 **Ending the Work break** Once the employee has been absent for the agreed period of the work break they should return to work on the agreed date but should contact their Headteacher at least one month before to confirm their intention to return on the agreed date and make arrangements for any necessary induction process or refresher training on return. If an employee is unable to return on the agreed date due to sickness or other absence, they must follow the relevant absence reporting procedure.

If the employee does not intend to return to work following the work break they should inform their Headteacher of this in writing, giving the appropriate notice as specified in the individual's contract of employment. The termination date should coincide with the planned termination date of the work break agreement. As the employee is voluntarily on unpaid leave at this time there is no entitlement for payment for the duration of the notice period.

An employee can terminate the work break agreement and return to work during the work break if their circumstances change and they feel that they are no longer able to comply with the terms of the work break. In this situation the employee should inform their Headteacher in writing giving one month's notice that they wish to terminate the work break arrangement and return to work.

An employee wishing to return from a work break should give at least one month's notice of their intention to return regardless of whether they are returning early. (NB: Anyone filling the position on a temporary basis will also require a month's notice of termination of the temporary contract.)

The employee will return to work on the same incremental point at which they left.

24.4 How To Apply If an individual wishes to take a work break they will be required to discuss this initially with their Headteacher on an informal basis, then submit an application. The application form can be requested from the Academy's HR Assistant.

Following discussion with the Headteacher, if a decision is made that the work break can be accommodated, a work break agreement will be prepared and signed by the Headteacher, employee and returned to the Trust HR Manager.

This policy will be reviewed every two years