



Treetops Learning Community

Time off for Dependants Policy

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TIME OFF FOR DEPENDANTS POLICY

Introduction

The law recognises and the Trust respects that there will be occasions when employees will need to take time off work to deal with unexpected events involving one of their dependants. All employees have the statutory right to take a reasonable amount of **unpaid** time off work, to deal with **unexpected** events affecting your dependants. This policy outlines the steps you should take if you need to make a request for such leave. No employee who takes reasonable time off in accordance with this policy will be subjected to any detriment.

Please note that in the very unfortunate event you require time off due to the bereavement of a child (including stillbirth), please see our Paid and Unpaid Leave Policy which may apply, although in some cases there may be overlap between that policy and this one and so both may need to be read together.

We apply this policy to employees of the Treetops Learning Community Trust only (referred to as "you" in this policy). It does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and is not intended to have contractual effect. We reserve the right to vary and amend this policy and any procedure under it at any time.

Dependants

For the purposes of this policy, a dependant is classed as:

- your spouse, civil partner, parent, or child;
- a person who lives in the same household as you but who is not your tenant, lodger, boarder, or employee;
- anyone else who reasonably relies on you to provide care and assistance (for example, this may include your grandparents, a stepchild, or a grandchild).

There is no right to time off under this policy to care for a person who is not a dependant, or when a person you know who is not a dependant dies. If you wish to take time off work in those circumstances, you should speak to the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher as it may be possible for leave to be taken another way. You should refer to our Additional Paid and Unpaid Leave Policy.

Entitlement to Dependants Leave

You are entitled to take a reasonable amount of **unpaid** time off during working hours to take action which is necessary:

- to provide assistance when a dependant falls ill, is injured, or assaulted (this includes mental or physical illnesses and they do not have to be life-threatening or need full-time care; it could be an existing condition that has got worse);
- to arrange care for a dependant who is ill or injured (e.g. to make arrangements for their longer-term care in hospital);
- to provide assistance when a dependant gives birth (for example if a dependant goes into labour unexpectedly and they rely on you to take them to the hospital);
- in consequence of the death of a dependant;
- to deal with the unexpected disruption or termination of arrangements for the care of a dependant (for example if a nursing home closes unexpectedly, or a child minder or carer fails to turn up to look after a dependant); and/or
- to deal with an unexpected incident involving your child which occurs unexpectedly while the child is at school or nursery (for example if your child has been involved in a fight, injured on a school trip, or suspended from school).

Time off is limited to the time that is reasonable to enable you to deal with the immediate emergency situation and, where necessary, to make appropriate ongoing arrangements for your dependant only. For example, you may take leave under this policy to deal with the immediate care needed if your child falls ill while at school and must be collected, but it would not cover time off to care for the child for the duration of the illness. Reasonable time off will not normally exceed more than one day. However, we will always consider each set of circumstances on their facts.

In addition to the statutory right to unpaid time off for dependants, at the discretion of the Headteacher, you may be paid for up to 3 days in any rolling 12 month period. Any further paid dependants leave will only be granted in exceptional circumstances and at the discretion of the Headteacher.

You are not entitled to time off under this policy if you know about a situation beforehand and you wish to take time off to care for a dependant yourself, rather than arrange for someone else to do so. For example, **you will not be entitled to time off to care for your child if their school holidays are different to that of the Trust.** In such situations this policy will not apply, and you should take advice from the Headteacher or HR Manager if you need to take time off work in these circumstances. It may be that such time off can be accommodated through the use of annual leave, parental leave, compassionate leave or, where appropriate, parental bereavement leave instead. Please refer to the relevant Trust policies for further information on those types of leave.

Requesting Dependants Leave

To have the right to time off work under this policy, you must notify your Deputy Headteacher or the HR Manager, by telephone as soon as is reasonably practicable of:

- the reason for your absence;
- how long you expect to be absent; and
- what you wish, if anything, to be communicated to your colleagues regarding your absence.
- Where relevant cover planning has been made available together with clear instructions on how to access it (If this policy does not apply please liaise with the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher)

If you need to notify us out of normal opening hours or if you cannot get through on the telephone, you should email the Deputy Headteacher, providing the relevant information required. We expect you to ask someone to do this on your behalf if you are unable to notify us yourself.

If the reason for the continuing absence changes from the reason you originally notified us of, you must contact us again as soon as reasonably practicable, to inform us of the new reason, in accordance with one of the emergency situations listed above.

A leave of absence form should be completed upon your return to work and be given to the Deputy Headteacher.

Where it is possible to do so in advance or when you return to work after taking time off under this policy, we may ask you to confirm the reason for your absence in writing when you return to work. We may also ask you to provide evidence for the reasons for taking leave.

Any failure to follow these procedures, or abuse of the right to leave under this policy, may result in disciplinary action under our Disciplinary Policy and Procedure in relation to any period of unauthorised absence.