

HOBBS HILL WOOD PRIMARY SCHOOL

Leave of Absence Policy

Committee	Resources
Author	Herts for Learning with local arrangements
Approved By Governing Body	2 July 2025
Frequency of Review	Every 2 years
Next review Date	Summer 2027

Our Vision

Aiming for excellence; creating equal opportunities for each individual to develop academic and life skills so they can make a positive contribution to their community and become lifelong learners.

Our Mission

Inspiring confident and independent learners

Our Values

We believe that children should be able to enjoy the rights and uphold the responsibilities of the school charter.

School Charter

We have the right to:	We have a responsibility to:
Be safe in school and online	Behave in a safe way
Learn	Listen and try our best
Be supported with our learning	Support and help each other
Be happy, play and have fun	Share, be kind, polite and considerate towards others
Be respected and treated fairly	Be helpful and responsible
A clean and purposeful environment	Recycle and keep the class and school environment tidy
Speak and be heard	Listen and respect each other's opinion

Objective and Scope

This policy covers annual leave, family leave and miscellaneous leave. A principal purpose in setting out this policy is to ensure that requests are dealt with fairly and consistently. Further guidance is available to the school via the Herts for Learning website.

The policy applies to all employees of the school. This policy does not form part of any employees' contract of employment.

1. Principles

- Annual leave and occupational sick leave will be in accordance with the relevant conditions of service for teachers and support staff.
- Other leave of absence will normally be on an unpaid basis, unless otherwise specified.
- All leave allowances should be applied pro rata to an employee's contracted hours, unless otherwise stated.
- The operational needs of the school will be paramount and, except in emergency circumstances, adequate notice of a request for leave of absence must be given.
- The responsibility for exercising discretion on behalf of the Governing Body is the Headteacher's, in accordance with the professional duties defined in the School Teachers Pay and Conditions Document.
- Any dispute or grievance about a request for leave of absence or payment during leave of absence will be dealt with through the school's Grievance Policy; there is no right of appeal to a leave request being declined.
- All requests for leave must be submitted to provide the school with reasonable notice
- It should **not** be assumed approval has been given until a response has been provided to your request.
- Where the request for leave concerns the Headteacher requests should be made to the Chair of Governors.
- Where a number of days' leave are specified, these are limits in any one leave year, namely from 1 April to 31 March.

2. Unpaid leave and pension deductions for employees in the Local Government Pension Scheme

Pension deductions will not automatically be made for any periods of unpaid leave. If an employee wishes to request to pay Additional Pension Contribution (APC) to cover the amount of pension 'lost' during a period of unpaid leave they should visit <https://www.lgpsmember.org/help-and-support/tools-and-calculators/buy-lost-pension-calculator/> to calculate the cost to buy back lost pension. Contact the schools' payroll provider on 01992 556 500 to find out the amount of pensionable pay lost to input into the calculator. After using the quote on the website above employees should, using the application form provided on this website, submit the application to the schools' payroll provider at hrpayrollqueries@hertfordshire.gov.uk. Should you have any queries, you can contact the pension provider on AskPensions@localpensionspartnership.org.uk or by calling 0300 323 0260.

3. Annual Leave Entitlement for Employees covered by Local Government Terms and Conditions

For support staff contracted to work for 52 weeks per year, the leave entitlement is dependent on grade and continuous Local Government service. See Appendix 1. This leave will normally be taken during the school holidays and must be agreed with the Headteacher or nominated person in reasonable time, prior to the leave being taken. Only in exceptional circumstances and with the express consent of the Headteacher, can leave be taken at other times. Support staff may carry forward up to 5 days to the next annual leave year, provided this is done with the Headteacher's consent and leave is taken prior to 31st May.

Staff will not be permitted to take leave during the term unless express consent from the Headteacher has been given. If leave is granted, this will be unpaid for term-time only staff.

All employees should make partners aware that as a rule time off in term time will not be granted to avoid costs incurred from the cancellation of surprise holidays for birthdays or anniversaries.

4. Teachers' Working Time

A Teacher employed full-time must be available for work for 195 days in any school year. 190 of those days must be days of which he/she may be required to teach pupils and perform other duties and 5 days' must be days on which he/she may only be required to perform other duties. The same applies for a teacher employed part-time, except the number of hours he/she must be available for work must be a proportion of full-time hours.

In addition to the hours a teacher is required to be available for work, he/she must work such reasonable additional hours as may be necessary to enable him/her to discharge effectively his/her professional duties.

These provisions do not apply to employees on either the Leadership or Leading Practitioner pay ranges or those acting up in such a role.

5. Special Occasional Leave of Absence

The school's policy as agreed by the Governing Body is:

5.1 Disability Leave (*only applicable to support staff employed on the HCC Collective Agreement terms and conditions*)

For support staff employees only, who have declared to their employer a disability as defined by the Equalities Act 2010, up to 5 days' paid disability leave may be granted (pro rata for part time employees).

Reasons for using disability leave might include:

- Attending a doctor's or complementary medicine practitioner's appointments
- Assessment of conditions such as dyslexia
- Hearing aid tests
- Training with guide or hearing dog.
- Counselling/ therapeutic treatment or recovery time after blood transfusion or dialysis
- Treatment for physiotherapy (sessional or residential)

Disability leave may not be used to cover an absence due to ill health.

5.2 Time off for a sick child or dependant

Absence to care for a sick child or dependant will be unpaid.

In exceptional circumstances compassionate, emergency or exceptional leave may be used for the first day of absence only (see 5.3). This would typically relate to the hospitalisation of the child.

For further details refer to the school's parental leave (unpaid) policy.

5.3 Compassionate, Emergency or Exceptional Leave

* See Appendix 4 for local agreement

Noting the provision set out in 5.2, emergency and discretionary leave enables employees to take time off work to deal with an unexpected or sudden emergency involving a dependant. The leave is to deal with the immediate issues and to sort out long-term arrangements if necessary. The circumstances that enable employees to take emergency and discretionary leave are:

- Helping where a dependant falls seriously ill, gives birth, is injured, or assaulted.

- Making care arrangements for the dependant who is seriously ill or injured.
- The death of a dependant
- The care of the dependant has unexpectedly been disrupted or terminated.
- There is an unexpected incident involving the child of an employee whilst at school.

A dependant is a spouse, child, foster child, parent, relative or partner living in the same household as the employee (it excludes tenants, lodgers, or boarders of the employee). A dependant also includes any person who reasonably relies on the employee to plan for the provision of their care, e.g. a partner who does not co-habit.

Leave to attend funerals is limited to the funeral of an immediate family member of the employee only (parents, a spouse, sibling, grandparent or child). **** See Appendix 4 for local agreement ****

An employee must notify their line manager as soon as practically possible in the event of an emergency. The Headteacher may approve up to 5 days' paid leave per leave year (pro rata for part timers) for emergency and discretionary leave.

For most cases, 1 or 2 days are reasonable to deal with a problem. The time off is to enable an employee to cope with a crisis, to deal with the immediate care and where necessary to make longer term care arrangements for the dependant. Where paid leave is granted the first day of absence will usually be paid in any one period of absence unless discretion is applied by the Headteacher.

5.4 Other personal reasons

Exceptionally, there may be other personal reasons for requesting leave of absence. Usually these will be one off events affecting family. An example might be attendance at a child's graduation ceremony. Such leave, where granted, will normally be unpaid and subject to adequate notice so that replacement staff can be employed if necessary.

Holidays to celebrate anniversaries, birthdays and such like are not considered to be one off and must be booked during school holidays.

5.5 Career Break/Extended leave of absence

Requests for longer periods of leave will be considered on an unpaid basis, for example, in the case of a lengthy period of caring for a chronically sick, disabled, or terminally ill, dependent relative. Extended leave can be for up to a year in duration. Sufficient notice that allows the appointment of a replacement should be given wherever possible. Further guidance on Career Breaks is set out in appendix 2.

5.6 Moving house

Up to 2 days' unpaid leave will be granted.

5.7 Service with Auxiliary Forces

Reservists are required to inform the Headteacher that they are or intend to become a member of the Reserve Forces. Reservist employees will also be required to grant permission for the Ministry of Defence (MoD) to write to the Headteacher to make sure the school are aware and provide details of mobilisation obligations and rights as an employee reservist.

Reservist training normally takes place during evenings and weekends. The Headteacher may however grant up to 5 days' leave at their discretion where training falls within an employee's normal working hours.

Additionally, up to 2 weeks per year can be granted to attend 'annual camp'. Employees are required to give as much notice as possible for the annual camp for line managers to arrange appropriate cover.

Leave may be refused if it had a detrimental impact on service delivery. In any case teachers and other classroom-based staff will only be granted paid leave if the forces' unit cannot arrange exercises during holiday periods.

5.8 Reservists

Reservists are required to inform the Headteacher that they are or intend to become a member of the Reserve Forces, and the specific force that they belong to. Reservist employees will also be required to grant permission for the Ministry of Defence (MoD) to write to the Headteacher to make sure the employer is aware that the employee is a Reservist.

The MoD will issue written confirmation to the school informing them the employee is a Member of the Reserve Forces. The letter will provide detail of mobilisation obligations and rights as an employee; rights as an employer; and details of the financial assistance available if an employee is mobilised. Where possible, it will also provide details of any annual training commitments. The MoD will also send a follow-up letter each year to confirm that the information held is still accurate.

5.8.1 Mobilisation of Reservists

Mobilisation is the process of calling Reservists into full-time service to serve alongside the Regular Armed Forces on operations. The Ministry of Defence (MoD) aims to give as much notice as possible of mobilisation (but at least 28 days) except in exceptional circumstances. In circumstances where a reservist employee is mobilised, they will not be paid by the school and should be placed on a 'career break' for payroll purposes to ensure their continuous service is not broken.

If an employee who is mobilised wishes to remain in the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS), the school's payroll provider should be informed who will calculate the contributions that the employee and the MoD must pay. For Teachers the relevant form must be completed, available online at www.teacherspensions.co.uk.

Should an employee wish to request leave due to mobilisation, they must contact the School Business Manager in the first instance. The school will follow the HfL Education guidance on time off work for reservists.

5.9 Carry-over of annual leave

The school expects employees who are covered by Local Government terms and conditions of employment to take their full entitlement of leave in each leave year, which runs from April to March. Where this is not possible, with the knowledge of and by arrangement with the Headteacher, employees may carry forward 5 days to the next annual leave year, provided this is taken prior to 31st May.

5.10 Religious Festivals

Where staff can show that they are bona fide adherents of any organised religion and that they require leave for the purpose of an official holy day, the Governing Body will allow up to 2 days' leave. Staff taking such leave will be asked to make up this time at a later date or if this is not possible any leave granted should be unpaid.

5.11 Sporting Events

Where staff can show they are representing their country they should write to the Headteacher so that arrangements can be made for paid or unpaid leave.

5.12 Attendance at Court Proceedings

5.12.1 Jury Service

Employees will be notified of a requirement to carry out Jury Service by letter from the relevant court. A copy of this letter should be given to the Headteacher as soon as possible and a request made for time off.

Unless the absence has a serious impact on the business then the school recognises that it must approve the time off.

Jury service normally lasts for 10 working days; however, it can be longer.

Employees will receive normal pay during the period of Jury Service on the condition that they complete the Certificate of Loss of Earnings or Benefit form to receive reimbursement from HM Courts and Tribunals Service. Employees will be paid as normal until the reimbursement has been processed. Employees must provide the school with the Remittance Advice Slip they receive, and the school will make the appropriate deduction for equivalent monies from the employee's pay by sending to our payroll provider. Failure to return the Remittance Advice slip will be investigated and could be considered Gross Misconduct under the school's Disciplinary Policy.

5.12.2 Attending court as a witness

Employees can be asked to attend as a witness in proceedings under both the Criminal Courts and the Civil Courts.

In such circumstances staff may be issued with one of the following:

- a court summons or subpoena, which requires their attendance and the need for them to give evidence
- a witness warning letter by the Police requiring them to attend court
- a court order requiring their attendance.

The school recognises that we must allow staff time off work to attend court proceedings if they have been issued with one of the above. The school recognises that the notice given to a witness can vary from a couple of weeks to only a few days and that the date may be postponed or cancelled any time leading up to the planned date, and even on the day itself. Employees should ensure they provide immediate notice of any request or change to planned dates.

Time off to attend court as a witness is unpaid.

5.13 Public Duties

School employees may be granted up to 18 days per annum paid leave to carry out the duties of the office of Leader, Mayor, JP or Chairman of Local Authorities. For employees who are School or College Governors, up to 3 days per annum will be paid. In addition to this, unpaid leave can be granted for employees carrying out public duties.

5.14 Study/Examination Leave

For employees who are sitting examinations relevant to their current post or career, providing the school is paying the fees, half a day study per examination plus half a day per examination will be paid.

5.15 GCSE Duties & Activities

For Teachers who are engaged in activities for examining groups, please refer to appendix II of the Burgundy Book, Memorandum of Agreement for the Release of Teachers.

5.16 Time off for Trade Union public duties

The school recognises their obligation in relation to Trade Union Representatives requiring time off work.

Should you wish to request leave for such duties, contact the School Business Manager in the first instance who can provide guidance from HfL Education regarding time off work for trade union and public duties.

5.17 Bad weather conditions

There may be circumstances when the employee is unable to attend work due to bad weather, but the school remains open as usual. All reasonable effort should be made to attend work. Alternative arrangements may be agreed with the Headteacher, e.g. working from home or at a different location. Where this is not possible, non-attendance will normally be treated as unpaid leave.

5.18 Time off for medical appointments and medical screening

The school will allow reasonable paid time-off for employees to attend medical appointments, which are unable to be arranged out of working hours. Before arranging non-urgent doctor's medical appointments, employees should seek the approval of their Headteacher if it is necessary to take time off work. Employees should make every attempt to make these appointments at the beginning or end of the day or during lunch breaks to minimise the time they must be absent from work.

Routine doctor or dentist appointments, e.g. check-ups, should not be taken during term time or working time for those working in holiday periods.

Elective procedures should be arranged during holiday periods and will usually be unpaid. Elective procedures are any surgical procedure that is scheduled in advance and is not an immediate or emergency medical requirement. It's planned, allowing for preparation and scheduling, unlike emergency surgery which is needed immediately.

Where possible, screening should be arranged outside of working time. If that is not possible, paid time off will be granted for medical screening (including cancer screening) where required by the employee's medical advisors.

6. Maternity, Paternity, Adoption Carers Leave and Antenatal care

There are specific entitlements for maternity, paternity, adoption, carer's leave and antenatal care, details of which can be found in the corresponding policy on the Teacher SharePoint and in the Staff Room.

7. In Vitro Fertilisation (IVF)

The Headteacher has discretion to approve up to 5 days paid leave (pro rata for part time staff) for infertility investigation and treatment.

8. Interviews

The Governing Body recognises the increasing tendency for prospective employers to require interviewees to attend for more than one day, especially for school management posts. There is also a growing tendency to expect prospective candidates to undertake a preliminary visit before the formal interviews.

To maintain a fair balance between the operational needs of the school and to minimise the burden on other staff, and to be fair to employees who will be seeking to further their career in the education sector, the Governing Body will grant leave of absence for interviews as follows:

- The Headteacher is empowered to approve up to a maximum of 5 days paid leave of absence for interviews, to cover both formal and informal stages of the process, during any one academic year.
- Further leave of absence for this purpose will normally be agreed and will be on an unpaid basis.
- For support staff any days beyond the initial 5 days could be made up during holiday periods, instead of being on an unpaid basis, provided that their work can be carried out during holiday time.

9. Unauthorised Absence

If an employee takes leave of absence without the prior consent of the Headteacher this will be investigated and could be considered Gross Misconduct under the school's Disciplinary Policy.

Appendix 1

HOLIDAY ENTITLEMENTS FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES

The leave year runs from the 1 April to the following 31 March.

For school-based staff working 52 weeks per year leave will normally be taken during the school holidays. Only in exceptional circumstances and with the express consent of the Headteacher can leave be taken at other times or carried forward to the next leave year. Any approved carry forward must be taken by the end of May and may be forfeited if not used by then unless there are exception circumstances.

Annual leave entitlement is based on grade and continuous service. Below are the details of annual leave entitlement for a full year (pro-rata for part-time staff).

For employees covered by the HCC Collective Agreement with effect from 01.04.12			
Grade	Less than 5 years continuous service	On the anniversary of 5 years continuous service, you are entitled to (pro rata for leave year):	On the anniversary of 10 years continuous service, you are entitled to:
HB to H7	25 days (185 hours)	29 days (214.6 hours)	30 (222 hours)
H8 to H9	27 days (199.8 hours)	29 days (214.6 hours)	30 (222 hours)
M1 to M5	29 days (214.6 hours)	31 days (229.4 hours)	32 days (236.8 hours)

Staff engaged on a term time only basis will not be permitted to take leave at any other time except during school holiday periods unless express consent from the Headteacher has been given.

Appendix 2 (As per HfL's Career Break Policy – April 2022)

Career Breaks

It is recognised that during an employees' working life there will be times when personal commitments may take priority over work e.g. bringing up children, longer term care for sick or dependent relatives, or pursuing a course of further education. The school may be able to accommodate such personal commitments, where operationally practicable, through career breaks. Employees should also give consideration to flexible working requests depending on their individual needs.

Career breaks enable employees to take an unpaid break from work for personal reasons whilst maintaining continuity of service with the school. The employee should try to give as much notice as possible to commence a career break (ideally 3 months) but a shorter notice can be accepted at the Headteacher's discretion for example where a dependant needs care at short notice.

With the exception of continuity of service all other terms of the employment contract with the school will be suspended. On return, at an agreed date following the career break, the employee will be able to return to the same or similar post within the school without competitive selection.

A career break may be considered appropriate for example:

- To extend a period of maternity/adoption leave
- To care for dependants
- To enter full time education
- Extended foreign travel

These reasons are not all inclusive and others may be considered, with the exception of taking up other full time paid employment. Employees who are on a career break may in exceptional circumstances take up a part time role for example to support a university course or extended travel. Permission must be sought from the school before taking this up.

Eligibility

All permanent employees with at least 2 years' continuous service with the school regardless of the number of hours worked are eligible to apply for a career break.

Length of career break

The minimum length of break is 3 months, for teaching and classroom based staff the expectation would be for this to equate to a term, and the maximum is 1 year. There is no limit to the number of career breaks an employee can take, providing they return to work at the school for a minimum of 2 years between each break.

Please note that for the first 30 days of a career break both employer and employee pension contributions are payable. For more information, please contact the Serco HR Payroll Transactions Team.

Pensions deductions

Pension deductions will not automatically be made during a Career Break. If an employee wishes to request to pay Additional Pension Contributions (APCs) to cover the amount of pension 'lost' during this period, they should make an election to the Local Pensions Partnership (LPP) within 30 days of returning to work.

Employees can visit <https://lgpsmember.org/more/apc/index.php> and click the 'Buy Lost Pension' option to calculate the cost to buy back lost pension. Contact our payroll provider to find out the amount of lost pensionable pay to enter into the website.

After using the quote on the website above employees should, using the application form provided on this website, submit the application to our payroll provider and send a copy to the Local Pensions Partnership.

Contact the LPP on 01992 555 453 or askpensions@localpensionspartnership.org.uk with any questions about the purchase of lost pension.

Organisational change

Consideration of planned organisational change should be taken before a career break is authorised particularly where there is potential for a reduction in posts.

If an employee is on a career break when a restructure is being considered, every effort should be made to contact them in order for them to have input into any consultations or feedback processes. Employees may be given the opportunity to return to work early if they wish to if the temporary cover can be ended at no additional cost.

Employees on a career break must be included in selection processes even if the Headteacher is unable to make contact with them.

Extending the career break

If the employee wishes to extend their career break, if the break taken was to be less than 1 year, they must do so in writing normally giving as much notice as possible. The Headteacher will give consideration to the extension along the same lines as the original request and may grant up to 1 year in total.

Cutting short the career break

There will be no automatic right to cut short a career break but the Headteacher will consider such requests from an employee if they can be accommodated.

If the employee does not return from the career break

If an employee does not wish to return from a career break, they should confirm this in writing **at least 4 weeks** prior to their expected return date, for those employed under School Teachers Pay and Conditions of Service the appropriate notice must be given in accordance with those terms. If, on the school writing to the employee to confirm the return date, the employee does not respond, their contract will be terminated on that expected return date.

Conduct during a career break

Employees should be aware that they remain employees of the school during a career break. Whilst an employee's off duty hours are their personal concern they should not put themselves in a position where their duties and private interests' conflict. The standards of the school's employee code of conduct should be maintained during a career break.

Appendix 3

Type of Leave	Legal Requirement	No Legal Requirement	Paid	Unpaid	Paragraph
Annual Leave entitlement for Local Government staff	✓		✓		Appendix 1
Disability Leave – Collective Agreement support staff only	✓		✓		5.1
Time off for sick child	✓			✓	5.2
Compassionate, Emergency or Exceptional Leave	✓		✓	✓	5.3
Other personal reasons		✓		✓	5.4
Career Breaks/Extended Leave of Absence		✓		✓	5.5
Moving House		✓		✓	5.6
Service with Auxiliary Forces	✓		✓		5.7
Mobilisation	✓		✓		5.8
Carry over of annual leave		✓	✓		5.9
Religious festivals		✓		✓	5.10
Sporting Events		✓	✓		5.11
Attendance at Court Proceedings		✓	✓		5.12
Public Duties	✓		✓		5.13
Study/ Examination Leave		✓	✓		5.14
GCSE Duties & Activities		✓	✓	✓	5.15
Trade Union Duties	✓		✓		5.16
Bad Weather Conditions		✓		✓	5.17
Time off for appointments (Doctor, Dentist etc.)		✓	✓		5.18
Maternity, Paternity, Adoption, Carers leave & ante-natal care	✓		✓		6
In Vitro Fertilisation (IVF)		✓	✓		7
Interviews within HCC or another Local Authority		✓	✓		8

Appendix 4

Hobbs Hill Wood Primary School – local agreement for Leave of Absence Policy. Originally agreed by Governors on 20 June 2017.

*Request for compassionate leave or other emergency leave

It is the expectation that all staff will request compassionate leave or other emergency leave. This may be in the form of a text, email or phone call from another member of staff, friend or relative to be received by midday on the first day of absence. The school will respond to the request in writing.

**Attendance at funerals

- All requests for attendance at a funeral will be granted.
- All requests should be limited to one day unless travel time is required, which would make this impossible.
- All staff will be paid for leave to attend a funeral if the relative falls within the close family/relative agreed list as follows:
 - Mother
 - Father
 - Brothers
 - Sisters
 - Your own children or stepchildren
 - Spouse
 - Spouse's parents, brothers, or sisters
 - Grandparents
 - Grandchildren