
Time Off for Dependants Policy

1. Purpose

This policy outlines the entitlement, procedures and responsibilities for employees who need to take time off to deal with emergencies involving their dependants, bereavement situations, adoption arrangements or parental leave. It supports the College's commitment to fairness, wellbeing, and compliance with statutory rights.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all employees of London Brookes College — full-time, part-time, permanent, fixed-term, or temporary — and supplements statutory employment rights and existing College HR procedures.

3. Time Off for Dependants – Entitlement and Circumstances

Employees are entitled to take a reasonable amount of unpaid time off during working hours to deal with emergencies involving a dependant.

Situations include (but are not limited to):

- *Providing assistance when a dependant falls ill, is injured, assaulted, or gives birth.*
- *Making arrangements for the care of a dependant who is ill or injured.*
- *Dealing with the unexpected disruption or termination of care arrangements.*
- *Handling incidents involving a child during school or college hours.*

Note: This entitlement is intended to deal with an immediate crisis, not for providing ongoing care. Typically, time off would be limited to a few hours or one working day.

4. Definition of “Dependant”

A “dependant” includes:

- *A spouse, civil partner, or partner;*
- *A child;*
- *A parent;*
- *A person living in the same household (other than as a tenant or lodger);*
- *Any person who reasonably relies on the employee for assistance or care during an emergency.*

5. Notification and Procedure

- *Employees must inform their line manager or HR as soon as reasonably practicable, stating the reason for and expected duration of the absence.*
- *Where possible, notification should occur before leaving work; in emergencies, as soon as possible thereafter.*
- *On returning to work, employees may be asked to confirm the circumstances in writing or provide evidence (where appropriate).*

6. Pay and Recording

- *Time off under this section will normally be unpaid.*
- *The absence will be recorded as “Time Off for Dependants – unpaid” unless otherwise authorised.*
- *In exceptional cases, the College may grant paid leave, or allow the use of annual leave or flexitime, at the discretion of management.*

7. Bereavement Leave

The College recognises the need for compassionate support during a bereavement.

Entitlement:

- *Employees are entitled to up to three days of paid bereavement leave following the death of an immediate family member (spouse, civil partner, child, parent, or sibling).*
- *Additional unpaid leave may be granted at management's discretion.*
- *For the death of a child under 18, or a stillbirth after 24 weeks of pregnancy, employees are entitled to two weeks' statutory parental bereavement leave, which may be paid in accordance with current legislation.*

Notification:

Employees should inform HR or their line manager as soon as practicable, confirming the relationship to the deceased and estimated absence duration.

Return to Work:

The College will offer reasonable support on return, including access to counselling or phased return arrangements, if required.

8. Adoption Leave

The College supports employees in taking adoption leave to care for a newly adopted child.

Eligibility:

Employees must have at least 26 weeks of continuous service with the College by the week they are notified of being matched with a child.

Entitlement:

Up to 52 weeks of adoption leave (26 weeks Ordinary Adoption Leave and 26 weeks Additional Adoption Leave).

Statutory Adoption Pay (SAP) may be available to qualifying employees.

Notice and Informing:

Employees must:

- *Inform HR within seven days of being matched with a child (or as soon as possible if not practicable).*
- *Provide official notification from the adoption agency confirming the match and the expected placement date.*
- *Inform HR at least 28 days before they wish their adoption leave to start.*

Return to Work:

Employees returning within the 52-week period will normally return to the same job, unless this is not reasonably practicable, in which case a suitable alternative position will be offered.

9. Parental Leave

Eligibility:

Employees with at least one year's continuous service are entitled to unpaid parental leave to care for a child up to their 18th birthday.

Entitlement:

- *Up to 18 weeks of unpaid leave per child, taken in blocks of one week (or one day for parents of children with disabilities).*
- *A maximum of four weeks may be taken per year per child.*

Notice and Informing:

- *Employees must give at least 21 days' notice of their intention to take parental leave.*
- *HR may request evidence of parental responsibility (e.g., birth certificate).*

Return to Work:

Employees returning from parental leave are entitled to return to the same job. Where this is not possible (for reasons unrelated to the leave), a suitable and equivalent position will be offered.

10. Abuse or Misuse of Policy

Any deliberate misuse of this policy — such as false claims or repeated non-genuine requests — may result in disciplinary action under the College's Staff Disciplinary Policy.

11. Monitoring and Review

The HR Department will review this policy annually to ensure ongoing compliance with employment law and best practice guidance (e.g., ACAS: Time Off for Dependents, GOV.UK: Parental and Adoption Leave).

***Updated on September, 2025
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