



## **STAFF LEAVE OF ABSENCE POLICY**

**for ACT and the following Academies:**

Holy Family Catholic Primary School  
Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School  
Our Lady of Ransom Catholic Primary School  
Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School  
St George's Catholic Primary School  
St Helen's Catholic Primary School  
St Joseph's Catholic Primary School  
St Teresa's Catholic Primary School  
St Thomas More High School

### **Assisi Catholic Trust Mission Statement**

*Our mission is to inspire the children in our care and that our schools place Christ and the teaching of the Catholic Church at the centre of all we do. We believe that every child has a right to educational excellence and we will strive together in partnership to ensure this happens.*

### **Motto**

*'Start doing what is necessary, then do what's possible and suddenly you are doing the impossible'*

### **Commitment to Equality:**

We are committed to providing a positive working environment which is free from prejudice and unlawful discrimination and any form of harassment, bullying or victimisation. We have developed several key policies to ensure that the principles of Catholic Social Teaching in relation to human dignity and dignity in work become embedded into every aspect of school life and these policies are reviewed regularly in this regard.

This policy has been approved and adopted by Assisi Catholic Trust Standards Committee in March 2025 and will be reviewed annually in February 2026.

## **1. Scope**

Assisi Catholic Trust is committed to maintaining the health, safety and welfare of its staff. We seek to provide a positive and healthy working environment, and recognise the value of our employees' work-life balance. Regular attendance at work is an integral part of each employee's contract of employment; however, we recognise that employees will, on occasion, have genuine and acceptable reasons to be absent from work. On those occasions, we will aim to support an employee during the period of absence, with the aim of assisting their return to work at the earliest opportunity.

We also understand that holidays are precious time away from the regular stress of work, and strongly encourage staff to take annual leave, where their annual leave is not covered by the school holidays. We also recognise that, on occasion, other types of leave may need to be requested due to unforeseen circumstances, and we will try our utmost to accommodate the needs of our staff.

This policy outlines provisions to minimise staff absence levels across the school, the school's duties regarding staff leave of absence, and the provisions for staff to follow when requesting leave. This policy also aims to provide a fair and consistent framework for managing attendance and informs all employees of their responsibilities regarding attendance at work.

In accordance with our obligations under the Equality Act 2010, we will make all reasonable efforts to allow employees with a disability that affects their attendance at work to continue their employment.

This policy is not contractual, and we may depart from its terms where reasonable and circumstances dictate.

## **2. Decisions regarding requests for time off**

The Headteacher (or Chair of Governors if it is the Headteacher requesting time off) has the delegated decision as to whether to grant time off and whether it should be paid or unpaid. Appeals against the Headteacher's / Chair's decision should be made to governors via the Grievance procedure.

Taking leave that has not been approved and any abuse of the policy will be dealt with under the school's Disciplinary procedure.

A formal record of requests including a description of the circumstances and whether or not the request was approved in accordance with the framework of the policy will be maintained by the school.

The instructions for staff to request a leave of absence or how to notify their individual school in the case of an emergency are detailed in appendix 2.

### 3. Statement of intent

Apart from having the direct affect on the quality of education provided, staff absences represent a significant cost to the resources of the school. These resources could otherwise be used to improve the quality of education.

The Trustees of Assisi Catholic Trust and the Governors of each academy within the Trust recognise the importance of consistency, openness and equality in responding to requests from staff for special leave of absence for family and personal reasons.

This policy recognises:

- the statutory entitlement to unpaid time off to attend to urgent matters related to dependants
- national and local agreements
- best practice which seeks to maintain good working relationships between staff and management
- the operational needs of each school and the Trust

It is intended that this policy will provide a clear and workable framework to enable requests for leave of absence for staff working in our schools to be reasonably and fairly handled. This policy recognises that the operational needs of our schools are a priority and there may be times when a Headteacher has to refuse a request for leave.

It should be noted that there might be occasions when circumstances arise not identified in this policy. In such circumstances the decision regarding leave of absence remains within the discretion of the Headteacher of the school in which the circumstance has arisen or Chair of Governors if it is the Head requesting time off. The Headteacher may seek advice from the CAO and or the Chair of Trustees if it is the Chair of Governors seeking advice.

Each case will be judged on its own merits and circumstances. The granting of time off in one case will not necessarily set a precedent for other cases.

In setting this policy the Trust has taken into account the arrangements available for short term cover for absent teachers.

Care will be taken in applying this policy to ensure compliance with equality legislation on avoiding discrimination.

All paid leave approved in line with this policy will be prorated for part time employees.

Pension contributions are affected by unpaid leave. Staff will be responsible for making their own arrangements to buy lost pension contributions and may contact their School Business Manager for further information.

#### 4. Time off for dependants

The Employment Relations Act 1999 provides all employees with the right to take reasonable unpaid time off to deal with certain unexpected or sudden emergencies relating to dependants. A dependant is defined as a spouse, child, parent of the employee or a person who cohabits with the person claiming the time off, but is not the employee's tenant, lodger or boarder who relies on the employee to help or to make arrangements.

Staff taking time off under this right must notify their Headteacher of their absence on the day they take time off and if possible to give notification in advance.

Circumstances when an employee may take time off are:

- To deal with a death of a dependant
- If a dependant falls ill, or has been injured or assaulted
- When a dependant is having a baby
- To make longer term care arrangements for a dependant who is ill or injured
- To deal with unexpected disruption or breakdown of care arrangements for a dependant
- To deal with an incident involving the employee's child during school hours

There are statutory rights to parental and adoption leave. Please speak to the HR Manager for further information.

#### 5. Compassionate leave

Each request for leave must be considered on its merits at individual school level. The type of circumstances that are covered, and the maximum leave that is advised is to be approved by the Headteacher include the following. (In the case of requests for leave by the Headteacher, judgements will be made by the chair of governors.)

##### a) Bereavement

Paid compassionate leave may be approved in the following circumstances:

- |     |   |               |
|-----|---|---------------|
| i)  | Dependant or near relative <sup>1</sup> : |               |
|     | The Headteacher may approve:              | up to 10 days |
|     | The Govenors may approve:                 | up to 15 days |
| ii) | Other relatives:                          |               |
|     | The Headteacher may approve:              | up to 3 days  |
|     | The Governors may approve:                | up to 10 days |

Leave is to be taken at the time of bereavement only (i.e. if bereavement takes place during a school closure the leave of absence permitted when the school re-opens will be calculated from the actual date of bereavement). This leave includes dealing with and

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<sup>1</sup> See appendix 1 for definition of near relative

attending a funeral. Additional unpaid leave may be approved at the Headteacher's discretion.

Employees wishing to attend the funeral of friends or colleagues may request unpaid leave.

**b) Serious Illness (including urgent hospital/dental treatment)**

Paid compassionate leave may be approved in the following circumstances:

- i) Dependant or near relative<sup>1</sup>:  
The Headteacher may approve: up to 10 days
- ii) Other relatives:  
The Headteacher may approve: up to 3 days

Absence of staff must be shown to be necessary and unavoidable for leave of absence with pay to be approved. Additional unpaid leave may be approved at the Headteacher's discretion.

**6. Sick children**

It is recognised that it can be difficult for working parents to respond to the need to care for sick children.

Staff have a statutory right to unpaid time off to make arrangements for the care of a dependant child.

Staff in our school's may take up to 3 days paid leave per school year to care for sick children. After which further unpaid leave may be approved where it is impossible to make alternative childcare arrangements.

This arrangement applies to all staff with dependant children. For seriously ill children see compassionate leave.

**7. Leave to attend significant events**

The Trustees recognise that from time to time staff may have the opportunity to attend a significant event during term time. For example, a child's school assembly/sports day, the graduation ceremony for a child or the wedding of a near relative<sup>2</sup>.

Teachers and term time only staff do not have an annual leave allowance that can be taken during term time. This policy enables staff to request unpaid leave in a school year in order to attend a significant event.

Staff must seek the express permission of their Headteacher for leave in advance of the event and there may be times when the Headteacher will need to refuse a request for leave due to operational difficulties. The operational needs of the school will always be paramount.

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<sup>2</sup> See appendix 1 for definition of near relative

## **8. Interviews**

All staff may take reasonable paid leave to attend up to 3 selection interviews for jobs in an academic year. Requests to take leave to attend an interview must be made to their Headteacher in advance of the event. Employees must produce evidence of attendance if requested to do so by their line manager or Headteacher.

## **9. Other leave**

### **9.1 Examination duties**

Teaching staff undertaking professional duties in connection with external examinations may take paid leave under the arrangements contained in Appendix 2 of the Conditions of Service for School Teachers in England and Wales. Employees must produce evidence of attendance if requested to do so by their line manager or Headteacher.

### **9.2 Jury service**

Employees may take paid leave to undertake jury service or to appear as a witness. They are required to claim the allowance for loss of earnings from the Court and an equivalent amount will be deducted from the employee's salary. Employees must produce evidence of attendance if requested to do so by their line manager or Headteacher.

### **9.3 Moving house**

Staff are encouraged if at all possible to make arrangements to move house during school closures. However, if this proves impossible, staff are approved one day of paid leave in order to move house. Their Headteacher is permitted to ask for documentary evidence relating to why the move could not take place during school closures.

### **9.4 Routine Medical and Dental Appointments**

Employees are expected to make appointments outside normal working hours wherever possible. However if necessary unpaid time off to attend routine appointments is requested, staff attending such appointments must seek the permission of the Headteacher before attending. The Headteacher has the right to request to see appointment cards.

Where it is discovered that the employee's absence requests are as a result of an underlying or ongoing medical condition it is usually appropriate to treat such individuals as having a long-term illness (see long-term absence section of Managing Sickness Policy). The leave may be paid or unpaid depending on the specific circumstances. In any event the situation will be treated with sensitivity.

### **9.5 Time off to attend ante-natal appointments**

The Maternity Regulations provide the right for all women to take paid time off to attend antenatal care. As Assisi Catholic Trust is a pro-family multi-academy trust, ante-natal leave for fathers and partners is also available for employees who have a qualifying relationship with a pregnant woman or an expected child. They are entitled to paid time off work to accompany that pregnant woman at up to two antenatal appointments. Employees must produce evidence of appointments if requested to do so by their line manager or Headteacher. Assisi Catholic Trust follows Government guidance and the Local Authority Policy on parental leave. Please speak to the HR Manager for further information.

### **9.6 Time off for Public Duties**

Staff who are appointed to an important office in public service, e.g., as a Magistrate or Local Government Councillor will be approved up to 18 days paid leave of absence in a school year.

Staff who hold such public office should advise the Headteacher at the time of their appointment.

### **9.7 Time off for Volunteer Members of the H.M Forces**

Volunteer members of HM Forces will be approved up to two weeks' paid leave of absence in any school year to attend summer camp where this cannot be arranged during a school vacation. If volunteers are mobilised the law protects employment and requires reinstatement on return from mobilised service.

### **9.8 Leave for Religious Festivals and Holy days**

Regulations do not require employers to provide time or facilities for religious or belief observance in the workplace. However requests for unpaid leave will be treated sympathetically where it is reasonable to do so.

### **9.9 Time off to accompany a fellow employee in a disciplinary or grievance situation**

Reasonable paid time off will be approved to accompany a fellow worker at a disciplinary or grievance hearing.

### **9.10 Trade union and professional association duties**

Staff undertaking recognised Trade Union or Professional Association duties are provided as paid time off as defined in the LA facilities agreement.

### **9.11 National sporting fixtures**

Staff are approved reasonable paid time off where they are a national representative in a sporting event.

## **10. Deductions from Pay**

Where the time off approved is unpaid, the deduction from salary will be at the following rates:-

- Teaching staff: 1/365<sup>th</sup> of the annual salary for each day's absence
- All other staff: 1/190<sup>th</sup> or 1/195<sup>th</sup> of the annual salary for each day's absence for those employees who work the same amount of hours each day on a term time only contract. For other employees or those employees who work different hours each day, calculation for unpaid leave should be made based on the number of hours that they would have been expected to work that day using the hourly rate on the payscales.

## **APPENDIX 1**

### **Definitions**

A dependant is defined as a spouse, child, parent of the employee or a person who cohabits with the person claiming the time off, but is not the employee's tenant, lodger or boarder who relies on the employee to help or to make arrangements.

A near relative is defined as spouse, child, parent, sibling or grandparent. This definition includes step relatives (e.g. step-father/mother, step-sister/brother) as the same degree of closeness as birth relatives.

Other relatives can be defined as members of a person's extended family – e.g. cousins, aunts, uncles, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, parents-in-law.

This list is not exhaustive and it should be noted that there might be occasions when circumstances arise not covered by these definitions. In such circumstances the decision regarding leave of absence remains within the discretion of the Headteacher or Chair of Governors if it is the Head requesting time off.

Each case will be judged on its own merits and circumstances. The granting of time off in one case will not necessarily set a precedent for other cases.

## **APPENDIX 2**

### **Leave of Absence Request Forms for primary and secondary schools**

**PRIMARY**  
**All Staff Leave of Absence Request Form**  
(not including sickness)

All leave requested during term-time will require prior consent before being booked.

<b>Surname:</b>	<b>Forename:</b>	<b>Department:</b>
The following time off work <b>is requested / was taken</b> (delete as appropriate):		
<b>Date from:</b>	<b>Time from:</b>	<b>Day of the week (Mon-Fri):</b>
<b>Date to:</b>	<b>Time to:</b>	<b>Day of the week (Mon-Fri):</b>
<b>Reason for absence</b> (please tick relevant box <b>and</b> provide further information below/attach evidence. For funeral, relationship to you must be stated):		
<input type="checkbox"/> Medical appointment/procedure (e.g. GP, dentist, hospital)*		
<input type="checkbox"/> Compassionate (e.g. funeral, bereavement)		
<input type="checkbox"/> Time off for dependants		
<input type="checkbox"/> Interview		
<input type="checkbox"/> Sick child		
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (e.g. examination duty, jury service, attending significant event)		
<b>Further information</b> (*Please explain why this could not be arranged outside working hours): ..... .....		
<b>Provide details of any duty swap:</b> .....		
<b>Employee signature:</b> ..... <b>Date:</b> ..... <u><b>Employee to now pass this form to their Line Manager (support staff) or Cover Manager or Deputy Cover Manager (teaching staff)</b></u>		
<b>Line Manager/Cover Manager/Deputy Cover Manager:</b> I confirm that I have reviewed this leave of absence request and can put it forward for approval:  <b>Signature</b> ..... <b>Date:</b> .....		
<u><b>This form to be passed to Headteacher / Director of Finance and Operations (support staff) or Assistant Headteacher i/c Curriculum (teaching staff) for final review and approval:</b></u> <input type="checkbox"/> Approved With Pay <input type="checkbox"/> Approved Without Pay <input type="checkbox"/> Approved as Time Off In Lieu <input type="checkbox"/> Not Approved		
<b>Signature:</b> ..... <b>Date:</b> .....		

## SECONDARY All Staff Leave of Absence Request Form (not including sickness)

All leave requested during term-time will require prior consent before being booked.

<b>Surname:</b>	<b>Forename:</b>	<b>Department:</b>
The following time off work <b>is requested / was taken</b> (delete as appropriate):		
<b>Date from:</b>	<b>Time from:</b>	<b>Day of the week (Mon-Fri):</b>
<b>Date to:</b>	<b>Time to:</b>	<b>Day of the week (Mon-Fri):</b>
<b>Reason for absence</b> (please tick relevant box <u>and</u> provide further information below/attach evidence. For funeral, relationship to you must be stated):		
<input type="checkbox"/> Medical appointment/procedure (e.g. GP, dentist, hospital)*		
<input type="checkbox"/> Compassionate (e.g. funeral, bereavement)		
<input type="checkbox"/> Time off for dependants		
<input type="checkbox"/> Interview		
<input type="checkbox"/> Sick child		
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (e.g. examination duty, jury service, attending significant event)		
<b>Further information</b> (*Please explain why this could not be arranged outside working hours): ..... ..... .....		
<b>TEACHING STAFF ONLY:</b>		
<b>Cover Required</b> (please tick relevant box(es)):	<input type="checkbox"/> Reg	<input type="checkbox"/> P1
	<input type="checkbox"/> P2	<input type="checkbox"/> P3
	<input type="checkbox"/> P4	<input type="checkbox"/> P5
	<input type="checkbox"/> DUTY - Mandatory	
	<input type="checkbox"/> DUTY - Voluntary	
<b>Provide details of any duty swap:</b> .....		
<b>Employee signature:</b> ..... <b>Date:</b> .....		
<b><u>Employee to now pass this form to their Line Manager (support staff) or Cover Manager or Deputy Cover Manager (teaching staff)</u></b>		
<b>Line Manager/Cover Manager/Deputy Cover Manager:</b> I confirm that I have reviewed this leave of absence request and can put it forward for approval:		
<b>Signature</b> ..... <b>Date:</b> .....		
<b><u>Pass this form to to Headteacher / Director of Finance and Operations (support staff) or Assistant Headteacher i/c Curriculum (teaching staff) for final review and approval:</u></b>		
<input type="checkbox"/> Approved With Pay		
<input type="checkbox"/> Approved Without Pay		
<input type="checkbox"/> Approved as Time Off In Lieu [Teachers only - ..... Hours for Cover]		
<input type="checkbox"/> Not Approved		
<b>Signature:</b> ..... <b>Date:</b> .....		