

Kesgrave High School



Sickness Leave of Absence Policy

This policy reviewed **triennially**

Policy Approval

Where	Chair	When
Operations	Eunice Brain	17 Nov 2021

Chair of Governors	Sue White
Headteacher	Julia Upton

Policy History

Issue No.	Author	Date written	Approved by governors	Comments
1	C Breckell	Nov 2018	Nov 2018	
2	C Breckell	Nov 2021	24 Nov 2021	

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1. Purpose

This model Leave of Absence Policy and Procedure has been developed to assist headteachers and governing bodies to manage requests in a fair and consistent manner taking into account the educational, operational and budget needs of the school, whilst recognising that the success of the school depends upon the contribution of all staff and acknowledging that a fair and effective policy contributes to the maintenance of staff morale and thereby to the success of the school.

When managing discretionary leave of absence requests, headteachers and governing bodies should consider arrangements in place for granting authorised absence to students. The basic principles attached to authorising absence for students will also apply to staff. It is hoped that most staff will not unreasonably apply for discretionary leave of absence during term time and that staff will recognise the disruption that such a request will cause to learning. However, it is recognised that there will be occasions when leave during term time may be unavoidable and this document is designed to help headteachers and governing bodies to deal requests for such leave.

Although the main emphasis of this document is how to manage requests for discretionary leave of absence, reference is made to all types of absence, including statutory absence, for completeness.

2. Scope, aims and principles

This policy and procedure applies to all teaching and support staff. It is non-contractual and may be amended at any time.

Statutory Obligations are under the following:

- Time off for trade union duties in accordance with provisions in Section 61 and 62 of the Employment Rights Act 1996.
- Time off with pay for safety representatives, appointed/elected by recognised trade unions both to carry out safety functions and to undergo relevant training.
- Paid time off for maternity, paternity, adoption and shared parental leave.
- Paid time off for ante-natal care under section 55 of the Employment Rights Act 1996, as part of the provisions for maternity leave (as substituted or amended).
- Unpaid time off for ordinary parental leave, dependants and domestic emergencies.

The following national provisions currently exist and are incorporated in to this policy.

Teachers (Burgundy Book Section 6)

- External examinations: paid leave for duties in connection with these in certain circumstances
- Jury service: paid leave entitlements should be comparable with other local authority officers
- Trade Union Facilities time: will be paid or unpaid depending on activity (also a statutory provision)
- Other circumstances: such as participation in Parliamentary elections, national representation in sport

Support Staff (Green Book Section 7)

- Public duties: paid leave for jury service, serving on public bodies, undertaking public duties
- Medical screening: paid leave for the purpose of cancer screening
- Special leave: paid or unpaid additional leave may be granted in special circumstances at the discretion of the employing authority

3. Exclusions

This policy does not cover the following:

- annual leave: determined by relevant terms and conditions of employment
- Flexible working arrangements, for which separate arrangements apply
- Sickness absence, for which separate arrangements apply
- Leave associated with redundancy, for which separate arrangements apply

4. Roles and responsibilities

a. The governing body

The governing body will review the policy regularly to ensure that it remains fit for purpose, that it is being used fairly and consistently for staff whilst at the same time, supporting the educational needs of the students and is sustainable against the school's budget.

b. The Headteacher

The Headteacher will be familiar with the provisions of the school's Leave of Absence Policy.

The Headteacher, or relevant nominee, will consider all requests for discretionary leave of absence and approve or refuse in line with this policy in a fair and consistent manner, having regard to: the nature of the request; any statutory obligations; pupil/student educational provision; service needs; eligibility, any previous requests, and the degree of flexibility that the Headteacher already has in current working arrangements.

Except in emergencies, on receiving a completed Leave of Absence Request Form from a member of staff, the Headteacher, or relevant nominee, will complete the form and return to the individual setting out the decision. If further information is required before making a decision the Headteacher, or relevant nominee, will arrange a meeting with the member of staff as soon as is practicable and with due regard to the timing of the intended absence. They will discuss the circumstances of the request, gather all the necessary information and document the outcome of the meeting on the request form.

Where the leave of absence request is made by the Headteacher, the request should be made to the chair of governors.

Once authorised the request form will be passed to the Business Manager, or other appropriately designated role, for processing.

The Headteacher will ensure that there are proper records of all requests for time off and that a copy is placed on the individual's personal file on each occasion. This will include retrospective consideration in cases of emergency.

c. The Business Manager

The Business Manager will ensure that all requests are processed in a timely manner in line with policy and payroll guidelines.

d. The Employee

All employees should familiarise themselves with the provisions of the school's Leave of Absence Policy.

Employees are expected to take steps to avoid requesting time off during term time wherever practicable. It must be understood by all that absences from work have an adverse effect on service delivery.

Unless there are exceptional circumstances preventing the employee from doing so, any requests must be submitted at least one week in advance of the proposed date(s) of absence, in order to allow the Headteacher, or relevant nominee, adequate time for consideration.

A template Leave of Absence Request Form can be found at Appendix A. The employee should complete it as fully as possible, in order to assist the Headteacher, or relevant nominee, in considering the circumstances of the request.

If an unexpected emergency arises and the employee is unable to request the leave of absence in advance, he/she must inform the Headteacher, or relevant nominee, as soon as is practicable, by telephone if necessary.

On returning to work, the employee will need to account for the time off in the same way as he/she would normally have done, had the request been submitted in advance, in accordance with this policy.

5. Unauthorised leave of absence

If an individual decides to take discretionary leave which has not been authorised by the Headteacher, or relevant nominee, s/he could be subject to disciplinary action under the school's disciplinary procedures.

6. Examples of leave of absence

The following table lists the typical circumstances where requests for time off may be received, and sets out whether the absence is discretionary or statutory.

The examples of leave given are non-exhaustive and where circumstances arise that are not identified in this policy, the Headteacher will discuss, as appropriate, with relevant members of the Governing Body in order to:

- make the final decision on whether or not leave is granted, and
- whether it is with or without pay.

Advice can also be sought from the school's HR Consultancy Team. The school will monitor the granting of all discretionary leave in order to assist in a regular review of its policy.

Category/Circumstances	Definition	Time Allowed
Discretionary Compassionate Leave (Immediate Family Member)	Compassionate leave is normally intended for circumstances where there is sudden or serious illness or death of an immediate close family member or life partner (including same sex partners) to support with the grief and bereavement and dealing with any arrangements e.g. husband, wife, partner, father, mother, son, daughter, brother, sister. The leave will reflect what is required in the circumstances and will not necessarily always be 10 days. All days are pro-rata for part-time employees. In exceptional circumstances additional leave may be approved but this will be on an unpaid basis.	Up to 10 days pro rata paid depending on circumstances Included within the 10 days pro rata is 1 day to attend a funeral
Discretionary leave to attend the funeral of someone who: - is not a member of the immediate family	For example: grandfather, grandmother, grandson, grand-daughter, step-father, step-mother, step-son, step-daughter half-brother, half-sister, father/mother in law, son/daughter-in-law, aunt, uncle, cousin or a close personal friend.	Up to 1 day unpaid
Discretionary leave to attend a doctor's, dentist or hospital appointment	<p>Employees are normally expected to ensure that appointments for personal visits to the doctor, dentist, hospital etc. are outside of contracted working hours. However, in the event that this is not reasonably practicable, time off from work will be permitted to attend such appointments. Employees should ensure that any time off causes as little disruption as possible, i.e. the appointment is at the beginning or the end of the day. The school reserves the right to see evidence of such appointments, such as a letter or appointment card. Where the appointment is not urgent, and where the time would negatively impact on the employee's area of work, or that of team colleagues, the appointment should be re-arranged to a more suitable time and date wherever possible.</p> <p>Where the Headteacher considers an employee has taken an unreasonable amount of time off for this purpose, the school reserves the right to withdraw payment for such absence, at its</p>	Paid/unpaid depending on circumstances

	<p>discretion and following consultation with the employee. Consideration will be given to the Equality Act 2010 and any statutory right to time off, in all instances.</p> <p>The absence will be recorded as sickness and the necessary self-certification form completed in the normal way.</p>	
<p>Leave for rehabilitation, assessment or treatment as a result of a disability (discretionary although there is a statutory right to leave considered as a reasonable adjustment)</p>	<p>The Equality Act 2010 identifies the provision of paid time off as a reasonable adjustment. It acknowledges that a disabled person may need to be absent from work for “rehabilitation, assessment or treatment”. There is no evidence that disabled people are more likely to be absent from work than other staff. However, in monitoring absence, due allowance should be made for absences related to a disability.</p> <p>Absences relating to appointments for rehabilitation, assessment or treatment of a disability should be recorded as disability leave. This is paid, and does not affect sick pay entitlements. However, any other periods of absence should be classified and recorded as sick leave.</p>	<p>Paid</p>
<p>Disability related sickness absence (discretionary although there is a statutory right to leave considered as a reasonable adjustment)</p>	<p>Disability related sickness absence is sickness absence related to an individual’s disability. For example: an episode or relapse of a disability related condition or time off for recuperation following a period of disability leave for treatment.</p> <p><i>Absences relating to appointments for rehabilitation, assessment or treatment of a disability should be recorded as disability leave. This is paid, and does not affect sick pay entitlements. However, any other periods of absence should be classified and recorded as sick leave.</i></p>	<p>Paid in line with Sickness Entitlement</p>
<p>Discretionary Emergency/ Dependant’s Leave (statutory right to apply for such leave)</p>	<p>The right to take time off work (unpaid) to care for dependants is available to all employees (a dependant is your spouse, partner or parent, child, someone living in your household as a member of the family or anyone else that relies on you for help in an emergency). Time off may be allowed to provide help or to make arrangements for providing care when the</p>	<p>Unpaid (with the exception of the 3 days granted in one rolling year)</p>

<p>although granting of such leave is discretionary)</p>	<p>dependant falls ill or is injured, or to cope when care arrangements unexpectedly break down. One or two days to make alternative arrangements will usually be sufficient. For teaching staff up to 3 days paid leave in one rolling year can be granted. Time in excess of this would normally be on an unpaid basis.</p>	
<p>Discretionary leave for Fertility Treatment.</p>	<p>As with other medical appointments, the expectation is that fertility treatment occurs outside of contractual working hours where possible. Where it can be shown that there are good reasons why this is not possible, the following will apply.</p> <p>Absence relating to the investigation of a fertility issue will be regarded as sickness absence. In such circumstances, the member of staff will be subject to the school's normal sickness absence provisions.</p> <p>Fertility Treatment</p> <p>Members of staff, who have completed 12 months' service, may be granted leave for fertility treatment or the support of a partner undergoing the same.</p> <p>Female staff personally undergoing fertility treatment</p> <p>Wherever possible, appointments related to fertility treatment should be arranged outside of working hours. Where this is not possible, a member of staff may be granted up to 5 working days paid leave in any 12 month period for the purpose of receiving and recovering from IVF treatment and to attend appointments specifically associated with the IVF process (i.e. pre-booked interventions for consultant appointments, collection and delivery of eggs, monitoring tests, etc.).</p> <p>Should the member of staff require time off because of the side effects of the treatment, it will be subject to the normal sickness absence entitlement. Sickness absence associated with IVF will not be regarded as 'pregnancy-related'.</p> <p>The paid leave can be taken to suit the member of staff's needs, subject to operational circumstances, e.g. in one block, separate days or half days. The leave entitlement will be pro-rated for part-time members of staff according to their normal weekly working hours.</p>	<p>Paid in line with sickness entitlement</p> <p>Up to 5 days paid leave in any 12-month period</p>

	<p>Members of staff supporting a partner undergoing fertility treatment</p> <p>If it is an essential requirement within the course of the treatment for the partner to attend a specific appointment, the school will allow eligible employees up to one day's paid leave in any 12-month period to support fertility treatment.</p>	<p>Up to 1 day paid leave in any 12-month period.</p>
Discretionary leave to attend interviews	Such leave will be entirely at the discretion of the Headteacher. Any decision will take account of the role being applied for and the likely impact that the absence will have on the school.	Paid or unpaid at the discretion of the Headteacher
Discretionary leave for moving house	Wherever possible staff are expected to ensure that any house move takes place out of school time. Where it is demonstrated that this is not possible, 1 day's unpaid leave may be granted.	1 day unpaid
Discretionary leave to deal with urgent/unforeseen circumstances	Any urgent and unforeseen circumstances (e.g. house fire/burglary/flood) which require urgent attention by an employee and prevents an employee attending work. Reasonable time off will be allowed.	Unpaid
Discretionary leave to attend a child's graduation from University/College	It is recognised that the employee will have no influence over the day when this will occur and that it will normally occur during term time.	1 day unpaid
Discretionary leave to attend a close family wedding	It is recognised that the employee may have no influence over the day when this will occur.	1 day unpaid
Discretionary leave to take professional examinations or for study	<p>It is assumed that the Headteacher will have approved the course of study and that the gaining of the specific qualification will be for the overall benefit of the school. If this is not the case it would not be reasonable for the Headteacher to allow time off during term time.</p> <p>Where the course of study has been approved, the Headteacher will allow time off as appropriate to enable the employee to take examinations. Only in exceptional circumstances would additional time off be allowed for study leave.</p>	Up to 3 days paid leave in each academic year.

Sporting and similar activities	Selection for representative sporting and similar activities may be seen as an honour for the school and highly motivational for students. The Headteacher should therefore consider sympathetically requests for paid leave of absence to participate in such events (e.g. at county or national level). However, extended absences (e.g. tours abroad) would require special consideration in each case.	Paid
Discretionary additional leave for carers	Although it is expected that employees will make arrangements that do not prevent them from carrying out their normal duties, in exceptional circumstances an employee may apply for leave in addition to paid annual leave, to deal with childcare and other caring responsibilities such as assisting a dependant during or after a stay in hospital, moving a dependant to residential or other form of care, helping a dependant through a medical procedure, etc. It is expected that this type of leave is taken where the employee has identified long-term, rather than short term, caring responsibilities. The granting of such leave is entirely at the discretion of the Headteacher after taking account of the impact such leave might have on the school.	Paid or unpaid at the discretion of the Headteacher
Discretionary leave for blood donors	Although it is expected that staff will make arrangements to donate blood outside of working hours, if there is an opportunity to donate blood locally and it will mean only a short time away from school with minimal disruption, time off with pay will be allowed for this purpose.	Paid
Gender transition	Time off for surgery and recuperation from surgery for gender reassignment will be recorded as sick leave. Other medical appointments relating to the process will be recorded as sick leave when it has not been possible to make them outside of working hours. There may also be a need for some non-medical appointments, for example for electrolysis or speech therapy. Headteachers should reasonably consider requests for unpaid leave or allow annual leave or flexi leave, where the system is in operation, for these appointments, when it has not been possible for them to take place outside of work time. Any reasonable absence because of the effects of treatment for gender reassignment should not be taken into account for the purposes of action for unsatisfactory attendance.	Paid sick leave or unpaid.
Occupational health appointments	Whilst employees are absent due to sickness, there is an expectation that they will make themselves available to attend any Occupational Health appointments regardless of when the	Paid leave

	appointment occurs. After returning to work, if any further appointments are made during the normal working pattern, paid time off will be granted in order to attend.	
Religious observances	Headteachers should try to accommodate requests for time away from work for religious observance. This includes religious festivals, time away from work during prayer and adjusting working times to accommodate periods of fasting. The Headteacher and the employee should work together to ensure that there is minimum disruption to the school and that leave (which would be unpaid) is avoided wherever possible.	Unpaid
Strike Action	It is an individual's choice as to whether to join strike action, but a normal day's pay will be deducted for each day the strike action continues and the employee remains off work.	Unpaid
Discretionary leave during adverse weather conditions	Employees have an obligation to present themselves for work each day at and between the times specified in their contracts of employment. During periods of severe inclement weather, if it is shown that the employee has made every effort to attend work but simply could not do so then the absence may be treated as paid leave. If, however, roads/public transport are available for use with only minimal disruption, and the employee still chooses not to attend work, the absence will be treated as unpaid.	Paid or unpaid, depending on circumstances
Discretionary leave for CPD/other training	Training will generally only be approved by a Headteacher when it is essential for either CPD or to enhance capability to the advantage of the school. When it is not possible for such training to take place out of term time, time off will be allowed with pay. Training may however need to be postponed when the needs of the school are such that time off on the dates allocated for the training do not prove to be convenient.	Paid

Other 'special' discretionary leave

Leave for medical screening	Wherever possible such screening will take place outside of term time. However, where this is proved to be not possible, necessary paid time off will be granted for the purpose of medical screening including cancer screening where this is required by the employee's medical advisors.	Paid
Leave for Trade Union activities	Where it is necessary for a trade union representative to carry out legitimate trade union business during term time, they will be allowed appropriate time off with pay. It will be expected that the majority of trade union activity will take place outside of school hours.	Paid
Leave for reservists (Royal Naval Reserves, Royal Marines Reserves, Army Reserve and Royal Auxiliary Air Force)	<p>It will be expected that reservists arrange training outside of term time. In exceptional circumstances the Headteacher may allow paid leave to attend annual training. This is a 15-day continuous training course, sometimes referred to as 'Annual Camp'. This may take place at a training establishment, as an attachment to a Regular Unit, a training exercise or a combination of any of these. Training normally takes place within the UK, although each year some Reservists train overseas.</p> <p>Employer's legal responsibilities under The Reserve Forces (Safeguard of Employment) Act 1985 (SOE 85) are as follows:</p> <p>If your Reservist employee is mobilised, when they return you have an obligation to reinstate them in the same role and on equally favourable terms and conditions as before (or as near as practicable).</p> <p>The Ministry of Defence aims to give at least 28 days' notice of mobilisation, although the Reserve Forces Act 1996 gives no statutory requirement for a warning period prior to a Reservist being called out.</p> <p>If a Reservist is mobilised and you believe their absence would cause serious harm to your business or a related business, you have the right to seek exemption, deferral or revocation of the mobilisation.</p> <p>If your Reservist is mobilised you don't have to pay them any salary or associated benefits (such as pension or company car) for the duration of their operational duty. A Reservist can claim for any benefits you stop so they won't be worse off.</p>	Paid

	<p>You are also eligible for financial assistance to cover the costs of finding a temporary replacement or retraining your Reservist employee under certain circumstances on their return. Further information on employing Reservists can be found on the website; http://www.sabre.mod.uk/Employers/Employing-a-Reservist</p>	
Leave for public duties	<p>Section 50 of the Employment Rights Act 1996 provides for employees to be granted time off work to perform those public duties specified in the section. These are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) a local authority (b) a statutory tribunal (c) a police authority (d) a board of prison visitors or a prison visiting committee (e) a relevant health body (f) a relevant education body, or (g) the Environment Agency or the Scottish Environment Protection Agency. <p>It is expected that much of the time spent on such duties will be either out of term time or out of normal working hours. However, where this is not possible and there is no adverse effect on the working of the school, unpaid time off may be approved by the Headteacher.</p>	Unpaid
Court Service (witness or jury service)	<p>Most court service is for jury service, but employees may also be called as witnesses.</p> <p>Individuals summoned for jury service are expected to attend court unless they are ineligible, disqualified or excused by the court. Jury service can be deferred. Among the categories who qualify for deferral are teachers during term time. Other school staff may not automatically be disqualified if called for jury service during term time.</p> <p>Applications for jury service to be excused on grounds of conflict with work requirements are likely to result in deferral, unless excusal is clearly necessary. Each application will be considered on its own merits, and applications must be made by those who have been summoned – employers cannot make them on employees' behalf.</p>	Paid

	<p>Employees required attending court for jury service or who are summoned to appear as witnesses will be granted paid leave for this purpose.</p> <p>Jurors are entitled to claim for travel and subsistence and for loss of earnings, up to a maximum daily rate. Where employees are entitled to claim for loss of earnings, they must get their employer to complete the appropriate certificate which is issued to all jurors prior to attending court. The arrangements for employees attending court as witnesses vary considerably.</p> <p>Loss of earnings claims must be made by employees from the Court, and these are offset against salary/wage.</p>	
Statutory maternity leave	<p>All pregnant employees can take up to 26 weeks' ordinary maternity leave (OML) and up to 26 weeks' additional maternity leave (AML), making a total of 52 weeks. This is regardless of the number of hours they work or their length of service. Additional maternity leave begins on the day after ordinary maternity leave ends.</p> <p>Once an employee has given notice that she is pregnant, she will be entitled not to be unreasonably refused paid time off work to attend antenatal appointments as advised by a registered medical practitioner, midwife or nurse.</p> <p>In order to be entitled to take time off for maternity leave and antenatal care, the employee is required to produce a certificate from her doctor, registered midwife or registered health visitor, stating that she is pregnant (usually the MATB1). Except in the case of the first appointment, the employee should also produce evidence of the appointment, such as a medical certificate or appointment card, if requested to do so.</p>	Paid/unpaid (see separate maternity and paternity guidance)
Statutory parental leave (some discretion when it can be taken)	<p>Employees with more than one year's continuous service are entitled to 18 weeks' unpaid leave for each child and adopted child, up to their 18th birthday. Employees need to request leave giving at least 21 days' notice before the intended start date. Parental leave should be taken in blocks of a week or multiples of a week, and should not be taken as "odd days off, unless the employer agrees otherwise or the child is disabled.</p>	Up to 4 weeks a year unpaid (18 weeks maximum up to child's 18 th birthday)

	<p>Employees cannot take off more than four weeks during a year. A week is based on an employee's working pattern. This entitlement is in addition to any rights to maternity/adoption and/or paternity leave or shared parental leave. Requests for such leave may be postponed for up to six months other than where parental leave has been requested immediately after childbirth/maternity leave or immediately after placement for adoption</p>	
Statutory paternity leave	<p>An employee whose wife, civil partner or partner gives birth to a child, or who is the biological father of the child, is entitled to two weeks' ordinary paternity leave provided that he/she has 26 weeks' continuous service by the end of the 15th week before the week in which the child is expected.</p> <p>Paternity leave is also available to adoptive parents where a child is matched or newly placed with them for adoption. For more information on adoption rights, please see the separate guidance on Ask Schools' Choice. Either adoptive parent may take ordinary paternity leave where the other adoptive parent has elected to take adoption leave. In respect of an adopted child, the employee must have 26 weeks' continuous service by the week in which the child's adopter is notified of having been matched with the child for adoption.</p> <p>To qualify for paternity leave, the employee must also have, or expect to have, responsibility for the upbringing of the child and be making the request to help care for the child or to support the child's mother.</p> <p>Paternity leave must be taken in a single block of one or two weeks within 56 days of the birth or adoption of the child. If the child is born early, it must be taken from the time of the birth but within 56 days of the expected date of childbirth. Paternity leave can start either from the date the child is born or placed for adoption or from a chosen number of days or weeks after that date.</p>	<p>2 weeks paid leave to be taken within 56 days of the birth or adoption of a child</p>
Statutory shared parental leave	<p>Shared parental leave is a relatively new right that may enable eligible mothers, fathers, partners and adopters to choose how to share time off work after their child is born or placed for adoption. This could mean that the mother or adopter shares some of the leave with her or his partner, perhaps returning to work for part of the time and then resuming leave at a later date.</p>	<p>First 2 weeks taken only by the mother</p> <p>Remaining 50 weeks can be shared between parents</p>

	The first two weeks of the 52-week entitlement must be taken by the mother or primary adopter, but the remaining 50 weeks' entitlement and pay can be shared or split between both parents, if they meet the eligibility criteria.	Paid/unpaid – see separate Shared Parental Leave policy
Statutory adoption leave	<p>For the primary adopters of children matched for adoption the rights to adoption leave and pay mirror maternity leave and pay.</p> <p>Primary adopters can take up to 26 weeks' ordinary adoption leave (OAL) and up to 26 weeks' additional adoption leave (AAL), making a total of 52 weeks. This is regardless of the number of hours they work or their length of service.</p> <p>Additional adoption leave begins on the day after ordinary adoption leave ends.</p>	Paid/unpaid – see separate adoption guidance

DISCRETIONARY LEAVE OF ABSENCE REQUEST FORM

Part A (for completion by the employee)

Please return to Anita Collett (associate staff)
 Cath Breckell (teaching staff)

Name		Date request made	
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Date/time from		Date/time to	
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For teaching staff cover required	AM Reg'tion	P1	P2	P3
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I have read and understood the Leave of Absence Policy and attach a copy of any relevant appointment card or other supporting documentation, if relevant.

Reason for Request (please detail below and continue on a separate sheet if necessary)

Signed _____

Date ____ / ____ / ____

Part B (for completion by the Headteacher, or other relevant senior manager)

Your request for leave is:

Approved with pay

☐

Approved without pay

☐

If the request has not been approved, it was for the following reason(s):

	Operational difficulties in covering absence
	Impact absence would have on continuity of educational needs
	Referred to governors for decision, outside of policy
	Other: Explanation of reason(s) for non-approval

Signed _____ **Date** _____

Job Title _____

Please return form to Julie Garnett for processing