

DIOCESE OF
ST ALBANS
MULTI-ACADEMY TRUST

Trust Policy

Leave of Absence

Policy type	Trust wide
Review	Three yearly
Author/Responsible Officer	Chief Operating Officer
To be ratified by	Finance, People and Operations Committee
Approved by	FPO Committee
Date of ratification	28 th February 2024
Date of next review	Spring 2027

This policy is a mandatory policy for all DSAMAT Academies and must be implemented without any amendments

Enabling all to flourish: Rooted in God's love



Our mission, vision and values

The Trust has a clear **mission** at its core, ensuring that all pupils are enabled to flourish, rooted in God's Love - academically, socially, spiritually, physically and mentally. This is central to our work, and rooted in our Christian foundation (John 10 v 10). Our commitment to mutual flourishing within the school community is built upon our shared belief in Church of England principles. In our Trust, just as in the wider Church of England community, 'flourish' refers to prospering, thriving and growing – not shrinking out and dying. It means prayerfully encouraging all within our schools so that they might prove fruitful, successful and contented in the longer term. We seek to provide space generously for all to flourish in life and all of its structures. Equitable treatment for all pupils, staff and the wider community is a core part of enabling this long term, holistic flourishing.

We have a clear **vision** about creating successful schools for the benefit of their communities. We expect any school in the Trust to continuously improve, and those graded by OFSTED as RI/Serious Weaknesses/Special Measures to make rapid progress and be able to secure an OFSTED grading of at least "Good" within 3 years post-conversion. All schools provide rich and diverse curricula which evolve to meet the needs of their children and local communities, as well as delivering educational excellence to enable them to continue to flourish in later life.

The way we work and deliver against our mission is critical to our Trust. We have shared, agreed **values** of:

Hope; Nurture; Equality; Respect; Collaboration

The Trust's vision is underpinned by a Christian values framework which is adopted by all schools. It provides clear expectations for all Trust employees on how we wish our values to impact on all areas of school life. It draws on, and is informed by, the National Church of England Vision for Education and the Diocesan Board of Education Vision.

Each school within the Trust has a personalised vision for education, developed locally to reflect the individual character and needs of the school community. This vision is underpinned by the Trust's wider vision, and agreed with the Trust, but it is owned and driven by the headteacher and their LGB.

Our community

The Trust are dedicated to delivering education that serves local communities. Our schools are inclusive, welcoming those from all and no faiths, from all abilities and backgrounds. We believe in providing a high-quality education, underpinned by Christian values, which enables every child to flourish.

Underpinning all of the Trust's work is a belief in educational excellence. The Trust serves all stakeholders by providing schools with the highest levels of academic rigour and pastoral care.

Our schools are places where children and young people develop and thrive intellectually, socially, culturally and spiritually. All of the Trust's schools teach a broad and balanced curriculum within

Enabling all to flourish: Rooted in God's love



national guidelines focusing on core skills. This is designed to ensure that all pupils reach their academic potential and seek to enrich their experience along the way. Pupils will be enabled to succeed in an atmosphere of high expectation, aspiring to educational excellence with a firm foundation of values.

This policy forms part of our Trust governance and ensures that we are held to the highest standards as we carry out our duties.

Statement of Intent

This is the Diocese of St Albans Multi-Academy Trust (DSAMAT) Leave of Absence policy and must be implemented and adhered to in each of the academies within the Diocese of St Albans Multi Academy Trust along with those working within the central team.

This policy will also be implemented and adhered to from the first day of any other academy joining the Trust. For the remainder of this document, the Diocese of St Albans Multi Academy Trust will be referred to as DSAMAT. Please read the DSAMAT Staffing Policy Statement in conjunction with this policy.



1. Introduction

1.1 The provisions outlined in this policy serve as a guide to the Headteachers, CEO and Chair of the Trust Board in determining fair and reasonable practices for staff leave of absence. Leave of absence may be defined as leave given in addition to annual leave and may be paid or unpaid.

1.2 The policy aims to maintain consistent, positive practices to minimise the negative effects of absence on pupil's learning and the imposition of increased pressure on colleagues. This may not entail identical decisions in all cases, as each individual case will be assessed according to circumstances.

2. Purpose Scope & Principles

2.1 Annual leave and occupational sick leave will be in accordance with the relevant conditions of service for teachers and support staff. Please refer to your Statement of Particulars for full details.

2.2 Other leave of absence will normally be on an unpaid basis, unless otherwise specified.

2.3 The operational needs of the Trust will be paramount and, except in emergency circumstances, adequate notice of a request for leave of absence must be given.

2.4 The responsibility for exercising discretion is the Headteacher's, in accordance with the professional duties defined in the School Teachers Pay and Conditions Document, CEO and Chair of the Trust Board.

2.5 Any dispute or grievance about a request for leave of absence or payment during leave of absence will be dealt with through the Trust's Grievance Policy.

2.6 A principal purpose in setting out this Policy is to ensure that requests are dealt with fairly and consistently.

3. Annual Leave Entitlement for Employees

3.1 For support staff that have a contract for 52 weeks per year, the leave entitlement is dependent on continuous Local Government service. For staff who commence or leave employment part way through the leave year, they will be entitled to annual leave proportionate to the number of complete month's service during the year.

For school based staff, 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. For central team staff, a minimum of 6 weeks' notice is required for leave approval and must be sought in writing from the CEO.

3.2 Only in exceptional circumstances and with the express consent of the Headteacher

Enabling all to flourish: Rooted in God's love



can leave be taken during term time. If the request is from the Headteacher, consent will be required from the CEO. If leave is granted, this will be unpaid for term-time only staff.

3.3 Carry over of annual leave

All employees to take their full entitlement of leave in each leave year. For school based staff this runs from April to March and for central team staff, this runs from September to August.

Where it has not been possible to take full entitlement, with the knowledge of and by arrangement with the Headteacher (for school based staff) or the CEO (for central team staff), employees may carry forward 5 days to the next annual leave year.

3.4 The HR lead within each school team or the central team will maintain annual leave records and confirm dates taken and number of days remaining per year.

4. Special Occasional Leave of Absence

4.1 Time off for a sick child

The first day is paid (and can be up to a maximum of three days in exceptional circumstances) to allow the employee to make arrangements for child care, however if an employee is frequently absent for one day for this purpose, HR advice should be sought on managing the particular circumstances. Any further absence should be unpaid except in exceptional circumstances e.g. hospitalisation.

Illness of immediate family member

Paid leave of absence of up to 3 working days in any one year must be granted for the purposes of attending to a sick, spouse, partner, child, parent, or a person who stands in loco parentis :

Any extension or further occasion in excess of the three days may be granted at the discretion of the Headteacher for school-based staff or Trust People team for Central team staff, but would normally be unpaid. Leave of absence for attendance at the illness of any other relative may also be granted on a discretionary basis but would normally be unpaid.

4.2 Compassionate, Emergency or Exceptional Leave

Staff will normally be granted up to 5 days paid leave per academic year in compassionate, emergency or exceptional circumstances, such as the death or serious illness of a close relative. This leave is to deal with the immediate issues and to make long-term arrangements if necessary.

For the purposes of this leave, close relatives are considered to be a spouse, civil

Enabling all to flourish: Rooted in God's love



partner or partner, child, grandchild, parent, grandparent, brother or sister (including an in law and step relatives).

The Headteacher/CEO/Chair of the Trust Board has the discretion to increase paid leave from 5 to 10 days per academic year after careful and sympathetic consideration has been given to the circumstances of the case, or in light of multiple cases within one academic year.

In some cases a longer period of absence may be approved on an unpaid basis with approval from the Headteacher/CEO/Chair of Trust Board, or a paid basis with approval from the Finance, People and Operations Committee.

4.3 Other personal reasons

Exceptionally, there may be other personal reasons for requesting leave of absence. Examples might be attendance at a graduation/award ceremony or the wedding of an immediate family member. Such leave, where granted, will normally be unpaid and subject to adequate notice so that replacement staff can be employed if necessary.

4.4 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's duration. Sufficient notice that allows the appointment of a replacement should be given wherever possible.

4.5 Moving house

One day's paid leave per annum will be granted.

4.6 Service with Auxiliary Forces

Volunteer members of UK Armed Forces are allowed up to 10 days paid leave to attend an annual summer camp. Teaching staff are only granted paid leave if the force's unit cannot arrange exercises during holiday periods.

When reservists are needed to fulfil their part of the UK's defence strategy, they are 'mobilised' or 'called out' into full time service with the regular forces or military operations. While the reservist is mobilised, the school does not have to continue to pay them, the Ministry of Defence (MOD) will pay their salary. For further information on mobilisation, please refer to the SaBRE (Supporting Britain's Reservists and Employers) website: www.sabre.mod.uk

4.7 Religious Festivals

Up to 2 days paid leave will normally be granted upon request, subject to reasonable

Enabling all to flourish: Rooted in God's love



notice. Further requests for time off, if granted will be unpaid.

4.8 Sporting Events

Up to 7 days paid leave per year may be granted for staff who represent their country in recognised sporting events i.e. National Championships, European, World Events and/ or the Olympics. Further request for unpaid leave will be considered.

4.9 Attendance at Court Proceedings

4.9.1 Jury Service

Staff required to attend for jury service should arrange for the loss of earnings certificate to be forwarded to the school's payroll team. The certificate will be returned to the member of staff completed to show to what extent the salary will be stopped during their absence. The amount will then be claimed from the court.

4.9.2 Witness summonses and subpoenas

Staff subject to a witness summons or subpoena will be granted up to 1 day paid leave to attend court.

4.10 Public Duties

School employees may be granted up to 5 days per annum paid leave to carry out the duties of the office of Leader, Mayor, JP or Chairman of Local Authorities.

Employees who are School or College Governor's, up to 3 days per annum will be paid.

In addition to this, unpaid leave can be granted for employees carrying out public duties subject to reasonable notice.

4.11 Study/Examination Leave

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

4.12 Time off for Trade Union duties

The Trust recognises the legal requirement for employers to allow reasonable paid time off work for the school's elected representatives of recognised trade unions to carry out their duties. Duties that warrant time off with pay include:

- consultation on terms and conditions of employment or the physical conditions of work;
- consultation on recruitment and selection policies, redundancy and dismissal arrangements;

Enabling all to flourish: Rooted in God's love



- meetings with school management on matters of joint concern;
- representing a union member at grievance, capability or disciplinary interview;
- attendance at relevant training courses organised by the trade union.

4.13 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.

4.14 Attendance at Award Ceremonies

Up to 1 day's paid leave may be granted to a member of staff, at the discretion of the Headteacher, CEO or Chair of the Trust Board, for attendance at a ceremony for the presentation of an honour or decoration either to that member of staff or a spouse, partner, child, parent, or a person who stands in loco parentis to the member of staff. This discretion should not be unreasonably withheld.

5. Time off for medical appointments

5.1 Where possible, employees are expected to make appointments out of school time. Where this is not possible, reasonable paid time off will be allowed.

5.2 Doctors/Dentists Hospital Appointments/Medical Screening

Employees are expected to arrange appointments for the doctor or dentist in their own time, as far as possible. Special leave for these purposes will only be granted in the most exceptional circumstances. If an employee has a hospital appointment that they have been unable to arrange to suit off duty hours, paid leave to attend may be granted at the discretion of the Headteacher / Trust People Team.

5.3 IVF Treatment

Any application for leave of absence to undergo IVF treatment should be handled sensitively and compassionately, taking into account the probable emotional impact on a member of staff leading up to, during, and following treatment.

Staff wherever practicably possible should be encouraged to arrange treatment outside of school hours or outside term time. In the event that it is not possible to arrange treatment outside of school time, the Headteacher or Trust People Team may, at their discretion grant up to 5 days paid leave in any one year on compassionate grounds.

Enabling all to flourish: Rooted in God's love



If treatment is unsuccessful and further absences are required within any one year period the Headteacher / Trust People Team may, at its discretion, grant unpaid leave of absence.

If as a result of IVF treatment, a member of staff becomes incapacitated e.g. necessitating bedrest on the advice of the GP or consultant, then the absence should be treated as sick leave, as set out in the appropriate conditions of service. In such cases the normal procedures for notification of sickness and sick pay should apply.



6. Maternity, Paternity, Adoption, Carers Leave & Antenatal Care

6.1 The specific entitlements for maternity, paternity, adoption, carer's leave and antenatal care are covered within the relevant policy.

7. Interviews

7.1 Up to 1 day's paid leave will be granted for attendance at a job interview.

8. Unauthorised Absence

8.1 If an employee takes leave of absence without the prior consent of the Headteacher or CEO this may warrant an investigation under the Trust's Disciplinary procedure.