

GLEBE PRIMARY SCHOOL UNITED LEARNING ACADEMY

Time Off Guidelines 2024-2025

Updated: Spring 2024
New Review: Spring 2025

Approved by the Local Governing Board on 6th February 2024



Signed by: Mr. James Dempster
Position: Chair of the Local Governing Body

United Learning Time Off Guidelines

Scope

The policy and procedure set out in this document applies to all staff employed by United Learning¹.

We are a values-led organisation which puts children first, expects the best from everyone and aims to bring out the best in everyone.

Where this policy refers to 'School' or 'Headteacher' within Central Office this should be interpreted to refer to the department where a member of staff works and their Head of Department.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 It is United Learning's objective to encourage and develop a positive culture towards attendance at work. It therefore recognises its need to be supportive of all its staff members and to be as flexible as possible whilst bearing in mind its primary purpose as the provider of education to its pupils. When reaching any decision about absence United Learning will therefore balance the needs of staff with the needs of students ensuring fairness for all those affected by any potential decision.
- 1.2 Employees are encouraged to make personal arrangements outside their normal working hours whenever possible. Employees should have regard to future commitments and allocate leave and schedule commitments accordingly. However it is recognised that on occasions this may not be possible for reasons beyond the employee's control.
- 1.3 United Learning, however, recognises that there are many different causes of absence from work. Most eventualities are covered either by statutory rights, contractual entitlements and agreements between the employer and its recognised unions. The spirit of these guidelines, therefore, is to give sufficient discretion and flexibility to the Head Teacher to enable them to respond sensitively and fairly to individual circumstances, whilst acting consistently and ensuring service standards are maintained. United Learning recognises that employees have some statutory rights in respect of time off, and that a defined working year and daily timetable bring with them particular needs in respect of time off for reasons other than sickness.
- 1.4 The following guidelines have been drawn up to cover those situations where an employee may need to be absent from work and that absence is not specifically covered by other policies, e.g. absence management, sick leave and pay, maternity/paternity leave, adoption leave, parental leave, time off for emergencies involving dependants.

2. Scope

- 2.1 These guidelines apply to all staff employed by United Learning irrespective of level, including fixed term, part-time, full time, permanent and temporary staff. They do not

¹ The two companies (United Church Schools Trust and United Learning Trust) are referred to in this policy by their trading name, 'United Learning'.



apply to those staff who are employed via an employment agency or a similar business who by the nature of their employment only receive payment for the hours they work.

3. General Principles

- 3.1 It is acknowledged that from time to time there may be an occasion when time off is unavoidable, for example medical appointments. Requests for time off should, where possible, be made in writing in advance to the Head Teacher. A written response should be provided stating whether or not the agreed time off is paid or unpaid.
- 3.2 When considering requests for time off the following will be taken into consideration:
 - a) Service delivery – in particular the impact upon teaching and learning;
 - b) Frequency of requests for time off;
 - c) Nature of the request;
 - d) An individual's domestic circumstances.
- 3.3 Time off with pay may be granted in some situations, for example bereavement and time off to attend funerals. Other than where specified in these guidelines, the amount of time agreed is at the discretion of the Head Teacher, taking into consideration these guidelines and the specific circumstances at the time.
- 3.4 Where paid time off is not applicable the employee should make use of annual leave entitlement, flexi/TOIL arrangements or make up the lost time. Depending on the circumstances, staff should also endeavour to take time off outside term time.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

- 4.1 The Head Teacher:
 - a) To consider requests for leave of absence in line with these guidelines, having regard to the nature of the request, statutory obligations, service needs, the employee's eligibility, any previous requests and the degree of flexibility that the employee already has in their current working arrangements.
 - b) To ensure consistency and fairness when considering requests, and approving or refusing leave.
 - c) Where requested, or in circumstances where clearly appropriate, to maintain confidentiality with regard to the reasons relating to employee requests for leave.
 - d) To ensure an employee is not subjected to detriment for requesting to take leave of absence, or for taking any leave which is approved.
 - e) Where discretion is exercised, full consideration is given to all the circumstances of the case, including (where appropriate) the closeness of the personal relationship of the person affected and conditions of service of the employee.
- 4.2 The Employee:
 - a) To ensure all leave of absence has been approved. Wherever possible requests should be made in advance and in writing.
 - b) Employees should submit leave requests to the Head Teacher.
 - c) To plan ahead with regard to future commitments and possibilities, making use of annual leave entitlement, flexi/ TOIL arrangements, and to take time off outside term time wherever possible.
 - d) Do not assume that a leave of absence request will be approved or be paid.



- e) In emergency situations, to notify their Head Teacher as soon as reasonably practicable, giving the reason for the absence and how long they expect to be away from work to deal with the emergency.

5. Annual Leave

- 5.1 Employees employed to work term time only (teaching and support staff) are not entitled to take leave during term time. Time off for holidays will only be granted in exceptional circumstances and will usually be without pay.
- 5.2 Time off including annual leave for those staff employed to work across 52 weeks must be requested via line managers, normally one month in advance. Newly appointed employees will normally have holidays and commitments honoured in their first year of employment provided these are discussed at the appointment stage.

6. Absence Guidelines*

6.1 Antenatal Appointments

Time off with pay will be given to attend ante natal appointments and GP or midwife prescribed classes, during pregnancies. See United Learning's Maternity Leave and Pay Policy (section 1) for further information.

From 1st October 2014, prospective fathers and partners have the right to attend up to two antenatal appointments with the mother. There is no requirement for this to be paid. For further details please see the United Learning Paternity Leave and Pay Policy.

6.2 Birthing Partners

Reasonable time off without pay will be granted whenever possible at the discretion of the Head Teacher and where service delivery will not be unduly disrupted. Employees are encouraged to also make use of annual leave entitlements, Flexi or TOIL arrangements where applicable. Employees should inform the Head Teacher in advance of their intention to be a birthing partner and when this is likely to be, although United Learning does recognise that the unpredictable nature of child birth will require some flexibility around when the leave is actually taken. When Head Teachers are considering employee requests, due regard must be given to consistency and fairness (4.1b). For childbirth by a dependent, please see the 'Time Off for Emergencies Involving a Dependent' policy for further information.

6.3 Postnatal Appointments

Time off with pay will be given for women to attend post natal appointments and relaxation classes. See United Learning's Maternity Leave and Pay Policy (section 15) for further information.

6.4 Bereavement and Funerals

The leave and pay arrangement set out below are given as a benchmark for Head Teachers and are not intended to imply a minimum, or a maximum entitlement. The actual number of days authorised should be appropriate to individual circumstances.



Where leave of absence is requested for a longer period, the approval of the Chair of the Local Governing Body is also required and this would normally be without pay.

- a) Bereavement of immediate family members or guardians/carers: the Head Teacher may grant up to five days leave with pay. For the purpose of this policy family, is defined as an employee's spouse, partner, parent/stepparent/guardian, brother, sister, grandchild, grandfather or grandmother.
- b) Bereavement of a child: parents/carers should refer to the [United Learning Parental Bereavement Leave and Pay Policy](#), which grants two weeks full paid leave to be taken anytime within 56 weeks of the child's death. Further leave may be granted at the Head Teacher's discretion and may be either paid or unpaid.
- c) Bereavement of a close relative: one day's leave with pay will be granted for the funeral of a close relative. This may be extended up to two days with pay if the funeral takes place at more than half a day's journey from the employee's home address. A close relative is defined as partner's parents, grandparents in law, brother/sister in law, uncles, aunts, nieces, nephews. This includes adoptive relatives.
- d) Bereavement of friends: up to a maximum of one days unpaid leave will be granted at the Head Teacher's discretion.
- e) When giving consideration to any exceptional circumstances when deciding whether to agree extended leave under these guidelines, the following may be taken into account:
 - i. Responsibility for the affairs of the deceased - an employee may be responsible for arranging the funeral and/or sorting out the will or other administration etc. In these circumstances account needs to be taken as to whether or not the employee carries sole responsibility, or whether it is shared with other family members.
 - ii. Time to overcome the loss - grief will affect different employees in different ways and Head Teacher's will be sensitive to this.
 - iii. Religious Duties - an employee may have a religious duty to observe a specific mourning period and the Head Teacher will respond sensitively and consistently to requests for additional leave. Any additional leave approved will normally be unpaid.
 - iv. Other special circumstances - account may also need to be taken of any other special circumstances that create additional unforeseen difficulties. For example the sudden death of a partner may require the remaining partner to make child care arrangements.

6.5 Blood Donation

Reasonable paid time off will be granted for blood donors where it has proved impractical to attend outside normal working hours. The employee should agree a mutually convenient time so that operational arrangements are not affected.

6.6 Compassionate Leave

Employees have a right to take a reasonable amount of time off work to deal with certain unexpected or sudden emergencies involving a dependant and to make any necessary



long term arrangements. In such circumstances paid time off may be granted at the discretion of the Head Teacher under the terms of United Learning's 'Time off for Emergencies Involving Dependents Policy'.

6.7 There may be other limited circumstances not covered by the above, whereby employees have to attend to responsibilities in relation to dependants or other family members i.e. illness, where normal care arrangements have been disrupted or are not appropriate. In such circumstances paid or unpaid time off may be granted at the discretion of the Head Teacher.

6.8 Cosmetic Medical Procedures

Reasonable time-off without pay may be granted by the Head Teacher for employees to undergo cosmetic medical procedures e.g. teeth whitening, tattoo removal, face-lift etc. Where it is anticipated that there may be a substantial recovery period the procedure should be arranged to be undertaken around the end of term.

6.9 Domestic Appliance/Car Repair

Reasonable time off without pay may be granted by the Head Teacher for employees to attend to car maintenance and the servicing/repair of domestic appliances, e.g. boilers, washing machines etc.

Consideration may be given as to whether the employee can work from home for all/part of the day, if appropriate for the role.

6.10 Domestic Incidents

In circumstances of serious domestic incidents, such as fire, flood or burglary, paid leave may be granted at the discretion of the Head Teacher for a reasonable duration of time, given the nature of the incident. United Learning reserves the right to request evidence of the incident, for example a repair bill.

6.11 Election to Public Office Campaigning

No paid time off is allowed for employees to campaign for election, either for themselves or when acting as an agent for someone else. However, unpaid time off may be given at the discretion of the Head Teacher.

6.12 Fertility Treatment

United Learning recognises that experiencing problems with infertility can be very stressful for employees, and that the timing of some treatments is critical. This will be given due consideration when leave for fertility treatment is requested. Treatment may include obtaining medical advice, tests, operations or courses of treatment. The Head Teacher may grant up to 10 days' paid leave in any one year for an employee to undergo fertility treatment. The year will run from the first date that leave for fertility treatment is approved. If employees require time off in excess of 10 days, then unpaid leave may be requested. Any time off that is required for post treatment recovery, should be dealt with under terms of the appropriate United Learning Sick Pay Policy.

6.13 Medical Appointments



Wherever possible employees should schedule medical appointments (this includes dentist, physiotherapist, chiroprapist, medical screening appointments etc,) outside their normal working hours. If this is not possible, the Head Teacher upon being given evidence of the appointment may give reasonable time off. Depending on the individuals circumstances and the nature of the appointment, this may or may not be paid at the Head Teacher's discretion. There is an entitlement for an expectant mother to receive paid time off to attend antenatal care or prescribed postnatal care, see Ante Natal Care above and the United Learning Maternity Leave and Pay Policy (section 1) for further information. Paid time off will also be granted in the case of a medical emergency which necessitates an individual receiving immediate hospital/dental medical treatment.

6.14 Hospital Appointments for Medical Treatment/Health Checks

Employees are entitled to paid time off work to attend hospital appointments to receive certain medical treatment or health checks e.g. checks for breast and cervical cancer but excluding cosmetic procedures e.g. tattoo removal, face-lift etc.

6.15 Health Screening

Employees are entitled to paid time off work to attend an annual health screening appointment, upon being given evidence of the appointment.

6.16 Interviews

- a) If a member of staff applies for vacancies within United Learning, time off with pay will be granted for the actual interview, plus reasonable travelling time, on production of the letter inviting them for the interview.
- b) For teachers attending a reasonable number of interviews for educational positions outside United Learning, time off with pay will be granted for the actual interview, plus reasonable travelling time, on production of the letter inviting them for the interview.
- c) For term time interviews for positions outside the educational sector, teachers should take the time as unpaid leave of absence.
- d) For support staff attending a reasonable number of interviews within the educational sector outside United Learning, time off with pay will be granted for the actual interview, plus reasonable travelling time, on production of the letter inviting them for the interview.
- e) For interviews for positions outside the educational sector support staff should take the time as paid annual leave (if they have a remaining entitlement) or unpaid leave of absence where they have no entitlement remaining.
- f) Employees who are officially "at risk" of redundancy will be afforded reasonable time off with pay for interviews with any prospective employer, on production of the letter inviting them for the interview.

6.17 Investiture with an Honour of Decoration

If an employee has the distinction of being included in an Honours List, then paid leave can be granted to enable the employee to attend the investiture. The employee should



let the Head Teacher see any correspondence received from the Crown in connection with this, so that leave can be arranged.

6.18 Jury Service

When an employee receives a summons to serve on a jury, they should contact the Head Teacher immediately and provide written evidence of their request. An employee required to undertake jury service is, effectively, entitled to paid leave of absence by virtue of the allowances which they must ensure that they claim from the Court, namely:

- a) Travelling expenses, including parking fees;
- b) Subsistence allowance;
- c) Financial loss allowance i.e. loss of earnings.

6.19 Employees should claim from the Court the maximum amount of allowances to which they are entitled in respect of loss of earnings. These will then be deducted from their earnings in order to ensure that they receive their normal gross earnings.

6.20 An employee should receive a Certificate of Loss of Earnings with the summons to attend court which they should ask the school to complete. At the end of the Jury Service, the employee should obtain a statement of the actual Loss of Earnings Allowance paid, so that the amount can be deducted from his/her salary and credited to the school's budget.

6.21 If employees report for jury service but are not called upon to serve on any particular day, they are expected to attend work on that day if it is reasonably practicable to do so in the time available. Employees should then continue to attend work until they are required to re-commence their jury service.

6.22 Moving House

The Head Teacher will grant one day with pay to employees who are moving house necessitated as a result of a new appointment within United Learning. Employees whose move is not related to an appointment within United Learning, who have an annual leave entitlement, will be expected to book annual leave in respect of this day. Where the individual has no annual leave entitlement remaining the Head Teacher has the discretion to allow a days' paid leave, depending on the circumstances.

6.23 Public Duties

Employees who hold certain public offices are entitled to seek reasonable time off where they act as:

- a) A Justice of the Peace;
- b) A member of a:
 - (i) Local Authority Council;
 - (ii) Statutory Tribunal;
 - (iii) School governing body;
 - (iv) Board of visitors for prisons, remand centres or young offenders institutions.

6.24 Of this absence the Head Teacher has the discretion to grant up to 15 days per year as paid leave of absence.



- 6.25 It is important to note that the above list is not exhaustive. In exceptional circumstances, paid leave in excess of the above amount may be granted at the discretion of the Head Teacher. Where it is not then unpaid leave may be taken.
- 6.26 Where an allowance is claimable for loss of earnings and the employee has received paid leave of absence, he/she should claim and then pay the allowance to United Learning. Please contact your Central Office HR Business Partner or local HR contact for further information.
- 6.27 Religious or Ethnic Festivals
United Learning will respond reasonably and sensitively to any request from a member of staff regarding their cultural or religious needs. Subject to approval by the Head Teacher, up to two days paid leave per academic year, pro rata for part time staff, will be granted for employees to attend religious observances or ethnic festivals e.g. Eid, Diwali, Vaisakhi, Yom Kippur. When considering requests for leave, the Head Teacher will take into account the reasonableness of the request and the potential impact on the work of the school. Where in addition to the statutory holiday entitlement, a school is closed in order for staff to be able to celebrate a particular religious observance or ethnic festival and this is a member of staff's normal working day, then they will be paid their normal pay for that day.
- 6.28 Reserve Forces
It is the policy of United Learning to support employees with armed forces reservist responsibilities as far as is reasonably practicable. It is the responsibility of employees to notify United Learning when they commence their employment of their armed forces reservist status and their liability for call-up. The employment rights of members of the reserve forces are governed by the Reserve Forces Act 1996. The Head Teacher cannot exercise his/her discretion and prevent a reservist employee from attending military service. The Act does allow for an appeal against the mobilisation notice if the loss of the employee would impact detrimentally on the operation of the School.
- 6.29 All leave whilst on military service is unpaid, as service pay is paid directly by the Ministry of Defence. Please contact your Central Office HR Business Partner or local HR contact for further information.
- 6.30 Study Leave (Personal)
Employees undertaking professional or further qualifications or a course of study not requested by, or paid for by United Learning, may be awarded at the discretion of the Head Teacher one day's leave without pay per exam or assessment day.
- 6.31 Study Leave (United Learning)
Employees undertaking professional or further qualifications or a course of study, paid for by United Learning, will be awarded one day's paid leave per exam or assessment day. A further day's paid leave per exam or assessment day can be awarded at the Head Teacher's discretion.
- 6.32 Employees undertaking professional or further qualifications or a course of study not paid for by United Learning may be awarded at the discretion of the Head Teacher up to



two days paid leave per exam or assessment day if the qualification or course of study will benefit the school.

6.33 Trade Union Activity

Recognised trade union representatives are entitled to reasonable time off with pay for duties and training and to reasonable time off (unpaid) to engage in trade union activity. The rights to paid time off for trade union representatives are subject to facility time agreements reached between United Learning and its recognised trade unions at a national level.

6.34 Trade Union Representatives (Specialist)

Some representatives are appointed by trade unions to represent the membership in respect of specialist areas e.g. health and safety and learning representatives. Such representatives are entitled to reasonable paid time off to undertake their duties. The rights to paid time off for such representatives are subject to facility time agreements reached between United Learning and its recognised trade unions at a national level.

6.35 Transport Strikes

Paid leave may be granted at the Head Teacher's discretion if there has been a bus or rail strike which prevented travel to work, with no other means being reasonably available.

6.36 Vets Appointments

Wherever possible employees should schedule vets appointments outside their normal working hours. If this is not possible, the Head Teacher, upon being given evidence of the appointment, may give reasonable time off. This may or may not be paid at the Head Teacher's discretion.

6.37 Weather Conditions Absence

- a) United Learning recognises that in some circumstances staff may be unable to safely attend work due to prevailing weather conditions and therefore due to no fault of their own. It will therefore take this into consideration when making any decision regarding payment in these circumstances.
- b) United Learning is under no obligation, however, to pay staff who are unable to come to work unless a decision has been taken to close their place of work. Employees are therefore expected to attend work in the normal way during severe weather conditions, unless to do so would be putting the employee and particularly those for whom such conditions might pose a particular problem e.g. disabled employees with mobility problems and pregnant employees, at risk.
- c) The following pay and leave arrangements are designed to allow for some recognition where the Head Teacher is satisfied that efforts have been made to attend work or work has been undertaken at home:
 - (i) Where a decision is taken to close an employee's place of work or reduce the period it would normally have been open, all employees to receive normal pay for the period involved.



- (ii) Subject to the Head Teacher's discretion employees who arrive late as a result of severe weather will not lose pay or be required to make up lost time.
 - (iii) Where employees are unable to attend work because it is their view, or they have been advised by the emergency services/police, that they would be putting themselves at risk then this will be without pay unless; they agree to make up for the time lost at a later date, (and their working arrangements are such that this is practicable), they take the time lost as holiday or their Head Teacher in exceptional circumstances agrees for the time to be paid.
 - (iv) They take the time lost as holiday or their Head Teacher because of the particular circumstances agrees for the time to be paid.
 - (v) Where employees report for work, for whatever period, they should receive a normal day's pay for each day they attend or be credited with the number of hours normally worked.
 - (vi) Where an employee with the Head Teacher's agreement works from home they should receive a normal day's pay for each day they so work or be credited with the number of hours normally worked.
 - (vii) Where an employee does not attend work because of domestic commitments (e.g. closure of their own child's school) he/she will be expected to take unpaid leave.
 - (viii) Any special cases which cannot be dealt with under the above guidelines will be determined by the Head Teacher.
- d) Any day the Head Teacher decides to close a school for health and safety reasons or because authorities such as the Police and/or Fire Services advise that travel should not be attempted, will be regarded as a working day for students and teachers. During such a period of closure teachers should, where possible, set work for the classes they teach and be available to carry out tasks associated with their roles or undertake tasks reasonably requested by the Head Teacher, from home. In any notice of closure parents and carers will be advised that work is available on the school Virtual Learning Environment 'Its Learning' or Moodle or via its own electronic communications system e.g. website parents section and e-mail. Where such a closure takes place all staff members should, wherever practicable, be contactable throughout their normal working hours. If required, staff who could reach the school safely, should come to work to give assistance (i.e. answering telephones or any other reasonable procedure associated with closure).

6.38 Weddings

Reasonable time off without pay may be granted by the Head Teacher for employees to attend a wedding.

6.39 Witness in Court/Employment Tribunal Attendance



Where a member of staff is required to attend as a witness then paid leave will be granted. Employees so required should provide appropriate written evidence of their requirement.

*Note: The above list is not exhaustive and decisions are at the discretion of the Head Teacher.

7. Unpaid Time Off and Deductions from Salary

Where time off without pay is granted the appropriate daily or hourly rate of pay will be deducted from salary.

8. TUPE Contracted Staff

For employees who have transferred to United Learning and remain on TUPE contracts it is necessary to consult their specific terms and conditions of service.

9. Employee Support

Employees can obtain free and confidential information, support and counselling on a wide range of work, personal, financial and family issues. All employees can access free support from Health Assured through [Perkbox](#). Health Assured can be contacted through <https://healthassuredeap.co.uk/home/>, 0800 756 0861 or 0800 028 0199.

Note: These guidelines are non contractual and will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure consistency, fairness and effectiveness, and in light of any changes in employment legislation. Such a review would also include full consultation with United Learning's recognised trade unions.

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