

SOLIHULL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

Leave of Absence Policy (School's)

This policy sets out the terms of agreement reached by those participating in the Council's Consultation and Negotiating Framework.

SMBC can provide information in a range of different ways, for example via the use of large print, audio, summarising large documents, interpretation, translation and British Sign Language interpreting services.

If you require this information in an alternative format or need assistance because English is not your first language, please contact your line manager or nominated Human Resources Advisor in the first instance for further support.

Leave of Absence Policy

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9.	May 2019	GDPR statement included in policy (section 5.4) and request form (appendix 1)
9.1	March 2020	Reference made to Carers leave and policy and Post-Entry Training policy / new parental bereavement leave section 7 added / changes to time off for interviews and general update / added Adult Cadet instructors to section 12.3
9.2	June 2022	Hybrid working refresh of policy. Other additions include: foster carers, election duties, pregnancy loss and time off for volunteering.

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1.0 Scope and Purpose

This policy applies to employees employed on NJC terms and conditions of service, Soulbury and centrally employed teachers, support staff and schools

The policy provides guidance on the leave of absence arrangements staff may request, which fall outside of the provisions already set out within the following documents:

- Annual Leave – Contract of Employment, Employee Guidance
- Adoption Scheme – Employee Guidance
- Conditions of Service for School Teachers in England and Wales (The Burgundy Book) Memorandum of Agreement for the Release of Teachers
- Carers Policy (optional – Schools' may adopt this policy, or it may be used as guidance in both maintained schools and Academies)
- Flexi-time guidance
- Flexible Working Policy – the right to request and the duty to consider
- Foster Friendly guidance
- Hybrid Working guidance
- Maternity Scheme (Teachers) / Maternity Scheme (Non-Teachers)
- Parental Leave Scheme
- Paternity and Maternity Support Scheme
- Pregnancy loss guidance
- Sickness Absence Management Policy
- Trade Union Time and Facilities Agreement

The purpose of the policy is to ensure that all employees are aware of the leave of absence provisions and requests for leave are dealt with in a fair and consistent way.

Statutory and discretionary leave of absence provisions exist to allow staff to manage their work and home life, by offering arrangements that enable them to balance their working life with other priorities.

2.0 Principles

The Council recognises the importance of supporting its employees in aspects of their lives which are external to their day to day working lives, but which may from time to time require leave of absence from their working duties.

Employees are encouraged to make personal arrangements outside their normal working hours whenever possible, in order to minimise the impact on their jobs and their colleagues. Hybrid working allows employees to have more flexibility over their working hours and location by agreeing an arrangement with their line manager that covers the service needs. Employees should have regard for future commitments and allocate leave and schedule arrangements accordingly. However, it is recognised that on occasions this may not be possible for reasons beyond the employee's control.

The spirit of the policy is to give sufficient discretion and flexibility to managers to enable them to respond sensitively and fairly to individual circumstances, whilst acting consistently and ensuring service standards are maintained.

3.0 Definitions

'Flexi' refers to the arrangements and use of Flexi-Time for those employees who have access to this facility and accrue flexi leave.

Time Off in Lieu (TOIL) for those employees who do not have access to Flexi-Time.

4 0 Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 Headteacher/Line Manager

- To consider requests for leave of absence in line with this policy, 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.
- To ensure consistency and fairness when considering requests, and approving or refusing leave.
- Headteachers should submit leave requests to their Chair of Governors. Delegated responsibility may be given in the Headteacher's absence
- Where requested, or in circumstances where clearly appropriate, to maintain confidentiality with regard to the reasons relating to staff requests for leave.
- To ensure that the Payroll & HR Administration Team is informed of any leave of absence arrangements which affect pay.
- To keep up to date records of leave requests, updating the appropriate documents or the Manager Self Service system where available.
- To ensure an employee is not subjected to detriment for requesting to take leave of absence, or for taking any leave which is approved.
- 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.
- In exceptional circumstances, teachers and school-based staff whose holiday periods are defined by school holidays may need to be granted discretionary paid or unpaid leave during term time. Any costs of supply cover for time granted under this policy will have to be met from the school's budget.

4.2 Employee

- To ensure all leave of absence has been approved. Wherever possible requests should be made in advance and in writing.
- Submit leave requests to their line manager. Delegated responsibility may be given in the manager's absence.
- To plan ahead with regard to future commitments and possibilities, making use of Hybrid working arrangements, annual leave entitlement, Flexi/ TOIL arrangements, and for term time only staff, the school closure periods.
- To not assume that a leave of absence request will be approved and avoid making plans (e.g. booking events) prior to agreement being received.
- In emergency situations, to notify the line manager 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. In these circumstances written confirmation of the dates and reason for absence should be obtained at an appropriate time.
- Not to abuse the provisions in this policy; any abuse will be dealt with in accordance with the Disciplinary Procedure, or during the probationary period in accordance with the Probation Policy. Any monies paid for inappropriate or fraudulently obtained leave will be repayable to the employer.
- To be aware of pension implications when taking leave of absence that affects pay.

LGPS/NHS employees may elect to buy any or all 'lost' pension through an Additional Pension Contribution (APC). If this is done within 30 days of returning to work the Council/ School shall pay two thirds of the cost of the APC (a shared cost APC) and you

will pay the remaining one third. If you make your election past the 30-day deadline the Council will not make a contribution to the APC and the full cost has to be met by yourself. Where you choose to stop contributions during the same period this will not count towards reckonable service for pension purposes until contributions are resumed.

Further advice can be sought from the LGPS by following the links at www.wmpfonline.com or by calling 0300 111 1665

Please note that if an employee is a member of the Teachers' Pension Scheme (TPS), pension contributions cannot be paid for periods of unpaid leave. Further advice can be sought from the TPS by following the links at www.teacherspensions.co.uk or by calling 0845 606 6166.

This may also affect other benefits such as National Insurance and tax contributions. Further advice should be sought from Human Resources.

4.3 Human Resources

- To provide advice, guidance and support
- To process payroll information received in relation to leave of absence

5.0 Procedure

5.1 Requesting Leave of Absence

Except in emergencies, permission to take any of the leave of absence outlined in this policy must be requested as far in advance as possible using the form in Appendix 1.

The form should not be used to request annual leave, adoption, maternity, parental, paternity or paternity/maternity support leave, as each associated policy contains the relevant form.

Where a request for leave of absence is refused, the employee should be advised of the reasons for this decision.

5.2 Recording Leave of Absence

The request form will provide the employee with a record of the leave of absence that they have requested, and any approved leave, which must be signed for by their line manager.

The line manager or person designated by them, will record ALL leave taken, whether paid or unpaid, full day or part day, on the employee's record (for annual leave) and in Oracle (for other types of leave) using Manager Self Service, where it is available.

In areas where Manager Self Service is not currently available, ALL leave taken will be reported to Payroll & HR Administration Team in the normal way using the relevant electronic form.

In emergencies, where it is not possible to request leave in advance and in writing, employees must notify their line manager 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. In these circumstances written confirmation of the dates and reason for absence should be obtained at an appropriate time. Taking emergency leave in this way can mean that it will be unpaid as the decision as to whether this would have been authorised as paid will be made retrospectively.

5.3 Unauthorised Absence

Unauthorised leave of absence should be dealt with in accordance with the [Disciplinary Policy](#), and salary will be deducted accordingly following written notification being sent to the employee.

If unauthorised absence occurs during the probationary period, it will be dealt with as a disciplinary offence in accordance with [Probation Policy](#), and salary will be deducted accordingly following written notification being sent to the employee.

5.4 Data Protection

Any information provided to the line manager will be maintained in strict confidence. When an employee makes a request to their line manager for leave of absence, the line manager should process any personal data collected in accordance with the Council's data protection policy. In particular, line managers should record only the personal information required to deal with the employee's request for leave of absence and keep this information only for as long as necessary to deal with the request.

6.0 Bereavement / Compassionate Leave

The line manager may grant permission for leave to be taken in cases of bereavement in an employee's immediate family.

Leave may also be granted on other compassionate grounds such as the critical illness of a close relative or where there are serious personal / family problems.

The number of days authorised should be appropriate to the individual circumstances and/or considerations outlined below. **Up to 5 days' paid leave may be provided. This is a benchmark for line managers and is not intended to imply a minimum, or in exceptional circumstances, a maximum entitlement.** In exceptional circumstances, this period may be extended at the discretion of the employee's Head of Service.

Where a request is made to bring forward annual leave to supplement bereavement/compassionate leave, please seek advice from Human Resources.

6.1 Considerations

- **The relationship of the employee to the deceased**

In this policy, immediate family is defined as the employee's spouse, civil partner, live-in partner, parent, child, sibling, grandparent or grandchild (For a child under 18, the provision for Parental Bereavement Leave shall apply as outlined in section 7).

In addition to those named above as 'immediate family', consideration may be given to other relationships in exceptional circumstances. The closeness of a relationship should be taken into account; for example, the deceased person may have raised or lived with the employee.

- **The Timing and Location of a Funeral**

Up to one day's leave should normally be granted to attend a funeral. However, location, the distance an employee may have to travel and any other 'access' difficulties (e.g. availability of public transport etc) may need to be taken into account.

- **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. 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.

- **Time to overcome the loss**

Grief will affect employees in different ways and the line manager will be sensitive to this. In appropriate circumstances employees will be encouraged to visit their GP, to seek bereavement counselling or referred to Occupational Health for advice. Short-term, goal-based counselling is available through the Council's Employee Assistance Programme provider 'Health Assured'.

Line managers can also refer to the document '[Bereavement Guidance for Managers](#)' for further advice on supporting a bereaved employee.

[Counselling is available through Maintained Schools Employee Assistance Provider 'Health Assured'. (Delete if not applicable which is most Academies that may provide other EAP services which can be detailed here)]

- **Religious Duties**

An employee may have a religious duty to observe a specific mourning period. The line manager will respond sensitively and consistently to requests for additional leave. Any additional leave approved will normally be unpaid, unless the employee requests to make use of flexible working arrangements, Flexi/TOIL or annual leave where appropriate.

- **Other special circumstances**

Account will be taken of any other special circumstances that create additional unforeseen difficulties. For example, the sudden death of a spouse may require the remaining spouse to make child care arrangements.

7.0 Parental Bereavement Leave

Parental bereavement leave is an entitlement to leave and pay for up to two weeks for those parents and primary carers who sadly experience the death of a child under the age of 18. The leave also applies to parents who suffer a stillbirth 24 weeks or more into pregnancy. In this instance, female employees will still be entitled to up to 52 weeks of maternity leave and/or pay.

'Primary carers' include adoptive parents, foster parents (who have had the child living with them for at least 4 weeks), guardians, a partner of anyone who qualifies as a parent and those classed as 'kinship carers', who may be close relatives or family friends that have assumed responsibility for looking after a child in the absence of parents.

The Council's policy is for this leave to be at full pay and there is no qualifying period of employment for employees to receive this leave and pay in such tragic circumstances.

Parental bereavement leave can be taken in units of one week and cannot be taken as individual days. Bereaved parents will be able to take the leave as:

- a single block of two weeks; or
- two separate blocks of one week at different times (for example the first week immediately after the child's death and the second week at the time of the funeral).

The leave has to be taken within 56 weeks from the date of the death of the child. This can allow bereaved parents flexibility as to when they take the leave. For example, an employee may wish to take leave around the first anniversary of the child's death. Employees already

taking maternity leave will be able to add their parental bereavement leave on to the end of their maternity leave.

Notice requirements for employees to take parental bereavement leave:

- **Leave taken soon after the death (within 56 days of the death)**
Bereaved parents will be able to take the leave straight away, without having to give a period of notice. They will still need to let their line manager know the reason for their absence from work and that they wish to take parental bereavement leave. However, informal notification, such as a phone call, email or text, will be sufficient in the circumstances.
- **Leave taken after the initial period (after 56 days of the death)**
After the initial period, bereaved parents will normally have to give at least one week's notice of leave by making a written request to their line manager (e.g. by letter or email).

When taking paid parental bereavement leave, a [form](#) will need to be completed by the line manager within a reasonable time. This can be found on the HR Intranet pages under 'Absence & Leave' and the line manager should send it to the relevant Pay & HR Administration team.

As long as the employee has given the proper notification, then the employee must be allowed to take the leave.

If an employee loses more than one child, they will be entitled to take a separate period of leave for each child.

The employee's line manager should also refer to section 6 on bereavement and compassionate leave and can discuss with the HR Advisor as to what other support can be offered to the employee.

8.0 Emergency Dependant Leave

The right to emergency dependant leave applies to all staff regardless of their length of service. It entitles them to time off for emergencies involving their dependants, and in order to make any necessary longer-term arrangements for their care.

The Head teacher/line manager may grant up to **3 days paid leave** during a 12-month rolling period. The provision is for a maximum of 3 days in a 12-month period, and this is not pro rata'd for part time employees.

The statutory right is for unpaid leave and there is no limit to the number of times an employee may request Emergency Dependant Leave, therefore any further requests over and above the entitlement outlined above will be taken as unpaid leave.

Requests for **additional paid leave** may be considered under bereavement / compassionate leave if appropriate. (Section 6).

The right is not for time off for the on-going care of dependants. If for example a dependant is unwell and requires on-going care, an employee is not entitled to time off to look after them beyond responding to an emergency or whilst making longer-term arrangements for their care. In circumstances where dependant care leave is not sufficient, employees should discuss the issues with their line manager or they may request to make a permanent change to their working pattern through hybrid working or the [Flexible Working Policy](#).

8.1 Definition of a Dependant

A dependant is defined as:

- The spouse, partner, child or parent of an employee, or any other person who lives in the same household as, or is their responsibility but is not their employee, tenant, lodger or boarder. This means that unmarried couples are included in the definition of a dependant, as are stepchildren and elderly relatives who are the responsibility of the employee.
- Any person who reasonably relies on an employee for assistance in cases of illness or injury or where care arrangements break down. For example, a dependant includes a relation whom the employee looks after, or an elderly neighbour who suffers an injury, where the employee is the person who is closest at the time of the injury.

8.2 The Timing of Emergency Dependant Leave

Emergency Dependant leave is for dealing with emergencies – examples of when this can be taken are (this is not an exhaustive list but is for guidance):

- If a dependant falls ill, gives birth, or is injured or assaulted. An illness (physical or mental) or injury need not be life threatening or serious, and it may be the result of a deterioration of a pre-existing condition. An employee can take leave to assist a dependant who is giving birth but not after the birth of the child (in these circumstances please refer to the parental and paternity and maternity support leave provisions)
- To make longer-term arrangements for the provision of care for a dependant who is ill or injured.
- To deal with unexpected disruption or breakdown of arrangements for the care of a dependant. An employee will be allowed time off if the dependant's normal carer, for example a childminder or nurse, is unexpectedly absent.
- To deal with an unexpected incident during normal working hours involving the employee's child.

The right is intended to cover usually unforeseen and emergency situations. However, the Council will consider events which may be foreseen, but which are of a serious nature such as to make the presence of the employee necessary. The latter is at the absolute discretion of the Council and may include such circumstances as accompanying dependants to medical appointments where the presence of the carer is required.

8.3 Notification

Employees must inform the line manager of: -

- the reason for their absence as soon as reasonably practicable; and
- the likely duration of the absence.

If an employee fails to reasonably notify the line manager and provide a reason for their absence, the leave will be treated as any other unauthorised absence in accordance with Section 5.3 of this policy.

9.0 Carer's Leave

Carer's Leave (optional – if school has adopted the policy) Up to one week's paid leave per annual leave year (pro-rata for part-time employees) may be granted towards caring duties for employees who are Carer's as per the definition in the Carer's policy/guidance. A short-

term unpaid break (up to a maximum of 3 months) called a “Carer’s break” can also be granted under this provision. Please refer to the Carer’s policy/guidance for details.

10.0 Foster Carer’s Leave

The Council support employees to offer the best to children in our care. Up to one week’s paid leave per annual leave year may be granted when they apply to become, or are, an approved foster carer for a Local Authority. An additional three days’ leave may be granted for placements of sibling groups or children with special or complex needs. For part-time employees, the leave will be pro-rata. The employee can take this leave to enable them to attend meetings, home visits and complete, mandatory training etc. Foster Carer’s leave cannot be carried forward to the next leave year if unused.

Please refer to the separate [Foster Friendly guidance](#) for further details.

11.0 Medical Leave

11.1 Leave of Absence for Medical Appointments

For guidance on attending personal medical appointments please refer to the appendix of the Sickness Absence Management Policy. This is available to employees on the Intranet or from your line manager or Human Resources.

11.2 Blood and Organ Donation and Medical Screening

The Council will grant reasonable paid time off for blood and organ donors and for the purpose of cancer screening.

The employee should liaise with the line manager to agree a mutually convenient time so that operational arrangements are not affected.

11.3 Fertility Treatment

The Council 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 Council will grant up to **10 days’ paid leave** (pro rata for part-time employees) 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 an employee requires time off in excess of 10 days, they should make use of annual leave entitlement, hybrid working, Flexi/TOIL arrangements or school holidays (term time only). Alternatively, unpaid leave may be requested.

An employee requesting time off may be required to produce documentation confirming details of appointments.

11.4 Elective Surgery

Where surgery is considered to be elective and not medically necessary there is no entitlement to paid time off. This includes cosmetic surgery, which is concerned with the enhancement of appearance through surgical and medical techniques and procedures.

Where time off is required, employees should use annual leave, Flexi/ TOIL or school closure periods (term time only staff).

For cosmetic surgery that relates to a medical condition and is supported by a medical certificate, the usual sickness absence provisions apply. Please refer to the [Sickness Absence Management Policy](#), this is available on the Intranet or from Human Resources.

11.5 Pregnancy loss

Employees (and their partners) who have experienced a pregnancy loss may need time off work to recover from the physical and emotional consequences.

The amount of time off that is needed will vary from individual to individual. The right to time off and the type of leave that an employee can take will depend on whether they had a miscarriage or stillbirth.

More details can be found in the '[Supporting employees experiencing pregnancy loss](#)' guidance.

12.0 Personal Development Leave

12.1 Exam and Study Leave

Paid leave of absence will be granted where the study / training has been approved by the Council and is a requirement of the job. Employees will be granted paid leave for the duration of any mandatory exams. Employees on an approved course sitting an examination, subject to line manager approval, will be granted revision leave with pay prior to examinations up to a maximum of three days.

For more information please refer to the [Post-Entry Training policy](#). **(Delete if policy not adopted by the school)**

Unpaid leave may also be granted through a [Statutory Request for Time to Train or Study](#).

Please note if the employee is 18 years of age or under please contact Human Resources for advice about leave for study and training.

12.2 Interviews

For internal roles - employees may attend job interviews within their working day, but must give their line manager as much notice as possible of their absence and only be away from work for the minimum time necessary to attend the interview.

For external roles (non Solihull Council) - interviews must take place during the employee's own time (e.g. annual leave).

Employees who are at risk of redundancy will be allowed reasonable time off during working hours to look for work and attend interviews throughout the redeployment process. Please refer to the [Management of Change](#) policy for more details. Requests for time off should be made in the first instance to the relevant line manager and will not be unreasonably refused. However, a balance should be sought between the Council's needs to run the service and the employee's need to find a new job.

Leave can be refused if the number of occasions requested is excessive.

13.0 Public and Voluntary Duties

13.1 Time off for Public Duties

Where an employee holds a public office or public position, which may include

- (1) A Justice of the Peace (magistrates); or
- (2) An official member of:
 - > a local authority;
 - > a statutory tribunal;
 - > a police authority;
 - > a managing or governing body of an educational establishment;
 - > relevant health, education, water and river authorities
 - > the Service Authority for the National Criminal Intelligence Service or the Service Authority for the National Crime Squad;
 - > the Environments Agency and the Scottish Environment Protection Agency;
 - > a board of prison visitors or visiting committee to prisons, remand centres and young offender institutions;
 - > the General Teaching Council for England and the General Teaching Council for Wales.

they have a right to reasonable time off work in order to perform the duties associated with that position (Employment Rights Act 1996, section 50)

Under normal circumstances the Council will grant **a maximum of 20 days (or equivalent for part time employees) in a 12month period**. This time will be paid at the normal rate of pay during periods of time off for public duties subject to the deduction of any monies received from the relevant authority in respect of the duties performed, which the employee must declare.

Leave should be agreed with the line manager and notification provided as far in advance as possible. Approval of time off for public duties will be subject to operational/ business requirements and whether other team members already have similar commitments impacting on staffing levels.

13.2 Jury Service or Witness Leave

An employee called up for jury service should advise their line manager as soon as they receive the jury summons letter. When requesting leave the member of staff should provide a copy of the court summons, and submit a claim to the court for loss of earnings. A claim form for this purpose must be obtained from the court. The line manager should advise the Payroll & HR Administration team of the jury service dates.

The employee will continue to be paid whilst on jury service at the normal rate of pay, subject to the deduction of any monies received from the court in respect of loss of earnings.

The school will advise the Payroll & HR Administration team of the amount received by the employee (excluding any expenses) from the court and provide the payment record. HR will then arrange to deduct this amount from salary in the following month.

Leave of absence will be approved if staff are required to be a witness in a criminal case subject to the above.

Further details can be found in the [Jury Service Guidelines](#) available on the Intranet.

13.3 Volunteer Reserve Forces, Special Constables & Adult Cadet Instructors Leave

Employees in the Volunteer Reserve Forces or volunteer as a Special Constable or Adult Cadet Instructor (e.g. an Adult Sea Cadet Instructor, Adult Air Cadet Force Instructor or Adult Army Cadet Force Instructor) may be granted **up to 10 working days per annual leave year with pay (or equivalent for part time employees)** in order to attend mandatory training.

Requests for additional leave will need to be accommodated through the use of flexible working arrangements, adjusting work patterns, annual leave, flexi/TOIL arrangements or may be taken as unpaid leave.

Please refer to the Reservists policy which states support and time off for staff in the reserve forces.

N.B. Term time only staff or staff working at schools should wherever possible endeavour to accommodate their training commitments during the designated school closure periods.

13.4 Election duties

The Council regard election duties as a public duty and, as such, allow employees to take time during their working day, with full pay, to undertake such duties. Employees may receive an allowance and expenses for carrying out these duties which they can keep.

Employees who undertake an election count during a normal working day may be entitled to take the rest of the day off with full pay after the election duties are finished. This will be confirmed at the time. If a count happens at night, there is no entitlement to have the day following as additional leave. Employees can request this as annual leave/flexi.

Employees who undertake an election count on a day they would not normally work may be credited for the hours they worked during the count. For example, if someone who does not work Fridays, did 4 hours for the count on a Friday, they could claim flexi time for 4 hours. This will be confirmed at the time as there are different arrangements for different types of elections.

These arrangements do not apply to agency workers.

14.0 Other Circumstances

14.1 Religious Observance Leave

Employees whose religious observance is not covered by weekends or Bank or Public Holidays may need time away from work. This can include days off for religious festivals, time away from work during the day for prayer, and adjusting working time to accommodate periods of fasting or requirements to cease work by a particular time.

Flexibility will need to be offered and line managers and employees should be aware and open to discussing what support or adjustments could be made, including requests around working hours and leave, the need for breaks, the timing of team meetings etc.

Please be aware that some religious events occur on different dates each year. SMBC provides an Outlook Calendar that seamlessly integrates into your desktop providing you with a daily digest of key dates within Solihull's culture and diversity calendar.

Requests for time off for religious observance will be considered sympathetically and on a case by case basis. The Council will give consideration to adjusting work patterns, approving unpaid leave or the use of flexi/TOIL/hybrid working arrangements or annual leave to enable employees to participate.

Requests should be made to the line manager in the first instance, who can seek information and advice from Human Resources or the Equalities and Diversity Team. Employees should try

and give as much notice as possible when requesting leave, however, it is acknowledged that it may not be possible to book leave in advance for some religious holidays and therefore line managers will need to be more receptive to holiday requests at short notice in these cases.

A useful resource is the '[Major religions and cultural impact - employee guide](#)' on the Intranet. This focuses on the major religions and is designed to help employees appreciate the main faiths found in the UK and how cultural traditions may have an impact on the way we deal with people from diverse backgrounds.

14.2 Time off for volunteering

We encourage and support the commitment of employees to work as volunteers in activities, organisations or teams that require support. Employees are encouraged to discuss any volunteering commitments they have outside of work, with their manager.

We will apply flexibility, where possible, to enable the employee to pursue these activities.

14.2 Special Leave

In addition to the leave of absence described in this and other policies, there may be other special circumstances in which staff may need to take leave of absence. Such circumstances may relate to emergencies or planned events and will be considered as outlined below.

14.2.1 Paid Leave

At the absolute discretion of the line manager, paid leave may be considered in personal domestic circumstances that are not covered by these specific arrangements and where the employment contract restricts use of alternative flexible working arrangements or annual leave. **Such leave should not normally exceed one day on any one occasion.**

14.2.2 Unpaid Leave

Where requests relate to longer term periods of leave such as, voluntary services overseas or participating in sport or the performing arts at a high level the line manager may, at their discretion and in line with service requirements, **approve unpaid leave of up to 1 month.**

Where requests for leave of absence extend beyond this, the line manager should refer to Human Resources for advice and information on how periods of unpaid leave can affect service, pension etc.

REQUEST FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE FORM**Managers to record the absence on Oracle and attach this form to the absence****DATA PROTECTION
FAIR PROCESSING NOTICE**

All information supplied on this form may be held and used as detailed below:

The request form will be retained securely by the line manager and accessed by, and disclosed to, individuals only for the purposes of managing your request for leave of absence. This will include the information being shared with Human Resources to process the request.

Information may be shared with HMRC, DWP, SMBC's Finance Department and SMBC pension providers where necessary. All information is strictly confidential.

For further information about how we use your information please refer to the Council's Data Protection Policy on the [Intranet](#) and Privacy Statement on www.solihull.gov.uk.

PERSONAL DETAILS

Your Name:	
Your Job Title:	
Directorate/Team:	
Name of Line Manager:	

DETAILS OF REQUEST

Dates From:	To:
Reason for Request: (attach evidence to support your request where applicable)	

APPROVAL (Line Manager)

Your request for leave is approved:		
YES with pay <input type="checkbox"/>	YES without pay <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
if No please give reasons below		
Reason(s):		
Line Manager signature:		
Date:		

ACTION/ RECORD (Payroll & HR Administration Team – Employee Service Centre/ Oracle Manager Self Service)

Completed by:	
Date:	