

# Longdean School



## Staff Absence and Cover Policy

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## **Staff Absence and Cover Policy**

### **Policy Statement**

Longdean School is committed to providing the best possible education for all students at all times; this includes occasions when members of staff are unable to take their classes. The following policy sets out how Longdean seeks to achieve this. The policy has been developed in line with the National Agreement on 'Raising standards and Tackling Workload' and the Workforce Agreement Monitoring Group (WAMG)

### **Cover aims**

We aim to:

- ensure that students have the best possible learning experience in light of staff absence
- support staff well-being both of absent staff and colleagues called upon to cover
- have a fair system for deploying staff to cover classes
- ensure that we uphold the principles of the Workforce Agreement
- deploy teachers in the most effective way to achieve higher standards in our school

### **Implementation**

1. A computerised system (Nova-T) is used to implement a rota with the aim of giving all staff some protected free time which can be used to demonstrate fairness.
2. All staff receive at least 10% PPA time within the cover system in line with the workforce agreement.
3. Staff will be taken for cover first if they have been released from other teaching commitments (eg examinations, trips, cross-curricula days).
4. Staff who wish to leave the premises during non-teaching time have to check with the Cover Administrator first and then should sign out.
5. Supply teachers will be used, wherever possible, for 5 periods per day and registrations. They should report to the Cover Administrator by 8.25 am.
6. The list of supply teachers is constantly reviewed.
7. Our supply teachers are engaged in accordance with current legislation including all safeguarding procedures.
8. Cover supervisors are employed by the school to support the quality of education received by students and to support staff well-being as part of the workforce agreement, including 'rarely cover' arrangements.
9. On occasions Higher Level Teaching Assistants may also cover short-term absences.
10. The senior management team will monitor and analyse patterns of absence (planned and unplanned) and levels of cover, including analysis of the student experience.
11. The cover administrator will keep a record of the amount of cover undertaken by each teacher.

### **Absence due to sickness**

Absence for sickness should be notified to the Cover Administrator between 7am and 7.30am (01442 205784). In the event of sickness of more than one day's duration, staff should give notification of each day's absence.

In the case of support staff absence for sickness, this should be notified to the Headteacher's PA from 7am onwards (01442 205702). In the event of sickness of more than one day's duration, support staff

should give notification of each day's absence. The Headteacher's PA should be made aware when the member of staff returns to work.

### **Conduct of cover lessons**

1. It is the responsibility of the Director of Learning to ensure that appropriate work is available to the person covering.
2. Set lists must be provided where registration for the lesson is not practicable on SIMS.
3. A seating plan should be provided where appropriate.
4. It is expected that the supervisor for the lesson will endeavour to ensure that students complete the work set and where appropriate help and guidance should be given to the students towards this aim.
5. Comments on the lesson should be noted on the cover sheet provided or emailed to the regular class teacher.

### **Cover for attendance at Inset**

1. As professionals we must be able to justify the impact of attending INSET against the quality of the lesson experienced by those students we would otherwise be teaching.
2. Typically no more than two staff will be allowed to attend INSET on the same day. It will be a case of prioritising needs of the whole school taking into account first come, first served.
3. Typically no two members of staff from the same department will be allowed on INSET – unless it is an absolute necessity. Attendance at INSET must be agreed by the line manager and the SLT link. It must be clearly linked to either the School Improvement Plan, the Department Improvement Plan or PM objectives.
4. Feedback from attendance at INSET is essential and should form part of professional development for other colleagues.

### **Moderation/Examination meetings**

Moderation meetings or compulsory meetings called by examination boards will be covered where necessary.

### **CPD**

Longdean School is committed to the continuing Professional Development of its staff so it would be exceedingly rare for colleagues to be called away from their fortnightly CPD sessions to cover for other colleagues. Where possible department CPD sessions are protected time.

### **Meetings**

The teaching of our students must be our priority. Therefore, meetings should not be arranged when people would otherwise be teaching unless it is absolutely unavoidable eg A child protection issue

### **Trips**

There is a separate policy for trips. The timing of the trip should be agreed with the Cover Administrator then the trips policy should be adhered to taking into consideration the implications for the rest of the school.

## **Gained time**

Staff may gain 'free' time throughout the year eg when Year 11 have mock exams. Any gained time can be used in the following ways:

1. Cover if agreed by the member of staff
2. Team teach
3. Intervention work
4. Curriculum planning eg Schemes of Work, assessment models, lesson plans, creating resources

## **Staff with light timetables**

The way in which the timetable is produced will almost always mean that some staff will be lighter on their timetable than their agreed load linked to their level of responsibility in the school. If a member of staff is light on their timetable these 'free' lessons can be used in the following ways:

1. Cover if agreed by the member of staff
2. Team teach
3. Intervention work
4. Curriculum planning eg Schemes of Work, assessment models, lesson plans, creating resources

## **Staff absence**

### **Policy Statement**

The principal purpose in setting out this Policy is to ensure that requests for staff absence are dealt with fairly and consistently and that there is an appropriate balance between what is right for the students in terms of their education and what is right for staff in terms of their wellbeing.

### **Basic principles**

1. Annual leave and occupational sick leave will be in accordance with the relevant conditions of service for teachers and support staff.
2. Other leave of absence will normally be on an unpaid basis, unless otherwise specified.
3. The operational needs of the school will be paramount and, except in emergency circumstances, adequate notice of a request for leave of absence must be given.
4. The responsibility for exercising discretion on behalf of the Governing Body is the Headteacher's, in accordance with the professional duties defined in the School Teachers Pay and Conditions Document.
5. Any dispute or grievance about a request for leave of absence or payment during leave of absence will be dealt with through the Schools Grievance Procedure.

### **Annual leave entitlement for employees covered by Local Government Terms and Conditions**

For support staff that have a contract for 52 weeks per year, the leave entitlement is dependent on grade and continuous Local Government service. (See Appendix 1). 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. Only in exceptional circumstances and with the express consent of the Headteacher, can leave be taken at other times. Support staff may carry forward up to 5

days to the next annual leave year, provided this is done with the Headteacher's consent and leave is taken prior to 31<sup>st</sup> May.

**Staff will not be permitted to take leave during the term unless express consent from the Headteacher has been given. If leave is granted, this will be unpaid for term-time only staff.**

### **Teachers' Working Time**

A Teacher employed full-time must be available for work for 195 days in any school year. 190 of those days must be days of which he or she may be required to teach students and perform other duties and 5 days must be days on which he or she may only be required to perform other duties. The same applies for a Teacher employed part-time, except the number of hours he or she must be available for work must be a proportion of full-time hours.

In addition to the hours a teacher is required to be available for work, he or she must work such reasonable additional hours as may be necessary to enable him or her to discharge effectively his or her professional duties.

These provisions do not apply to deputy head teachers, assistant head teachers, advanced skills teachers or teachers in receipt of an acting allowance for carrying out the duties of a Headteacher teacher, deputy head teacher or assistant headteacher.

### **Special Occasional Leave of Absence**

If a teacher wishes to have leave of absence they must complete the Leave of Absence green forms and give the form to the Headteacher. The School's policy on what constitutes paid/unpaid leave as agreed by the Governing Body is:

#### **1. Time off for a sick child**

The first day is paid to allow the employee to make arrangements for child care. Any further absence should be unpaid except in exceptional circumstances e.g. hospitalisation.

#### **2. Compassionate, Emergency or Exceptional Leave**

Staff will normally be granted up to 5 days paid leave in compassionate, emergency or exceptional circumstances, such as the death or serious illness of a close relative or equivalent. The leave is to deal with the immediate issues and to sort out long term arrangements if necessary. In some cases a longer period of absence may be approved on an unpaid basis.

#### **3. Wedding (self or family)**

Staff will be granted paid leave as long as the school has been given sufficient notice to manage the absence.

#### **4. Other personal reasons**

Exceptionally, there may be other personal reasons for requesting leave of absence. Examples might be:

- Attendance at a child's graduation ceremony
- A wedding of a friend/colleague
- "Once in a lifetime" visit to relatives overseas.
- Attendance at a funeral of a distant relative, friend, colleague
- Assistance in caring for family/friend beyond where paid compassionate leave is awarded
- Where time is needed to deal with domestic problems less severe than those warranting paid compassionate leave e.g. child sickness, unforeseen circumstances such as travel delay

Such leave, where granted, will normally be unpaid and subject to adequate notice so that replacement staff can be employed if necessary.

## **5. 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.

## **6. Moving house**

Up to one full day paid leave will be granted.

## **7. Service with Auxiliary Forces**

Volunteer members of UK Armed Forces are allowed two weeks 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.

## **8. Mobilisation**

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](http://www.sabre.mod.uk)

## **9. Carry over of annual leave**

The School expects employees who are covered by Local Government terms and conditions of employment to take their full entitlement of leave in each leave year, which runs from April to March. Where this is not possible, with the knowledge of and by arrangement with the Headteacher, employees may carry forward 5 days to the next annual leave year, provided this is taken prior to 31 May.

## **10. Religious Festivals**

Where staff can show that they are bona fide adherents of any organised religion and that they require leave for the purpose of an official holy day, the Governing Body will allow up to 2 days paid leave. Staff taking such leave are asked to make up this time at a later date.

#### **11. National Representation at Sporting Events**

Up to 18 days paid leave per year may be granted for staff who represent their country in recognised sporting events.

#### **12. Attendance at Court Proceedings**

- 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.

- Witness summonses and subpoenas

Staff subject to a witness summons or subpoena should be allowed paid time off work to attend court.

#### **13. Public Duties**

School employees may be granted up to 18 days per annum paid leave to carry out the duties of the office of Leader, Mayor, JP or Chairman of Local Authorities. For 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.

#### **14. 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.

#### **15. GCSE Duties & Activities**

For Teachers who are engaged in activities for examining groups, please refer to appendix II of the Burgundy Book, Memorandum of Agreement for the Release of Teachers.

#### **16. Time off for Trade Union duties**

The school recognises the legal requirement for employers to allow reasonable 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

- meetings with school management or LA officers 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

The County Council has a separate agreement with Trade Unions and Professional Associations to provide paid time off for their county representatives. The nominated county representatives are allowed time off each week to carry out their duties and the school is reimbursed from a council budget.

#### **17. 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, but exceptional circumstances may warrant paid leave.

#### **18. Time off for medical appointments**

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

#### **Maternity, Paternity, Adoption, Carers leave and Antenatal Care**

There are specific entitlements for maternity, paternity, adoption, carer's leave and antenatal care contained in the Carers Guide for Schools, a copy of which can be obtained from the school office.

#### **Interviews**

The Governing Body recognises the increasing tendency for prospective employers to require interviewees to attend for more than one day, especially for school management posts. There is also a growing tendency to expect prospective candidates to undertake a preliminary visit before the formal interviews.

In order to maintain a fair balance between the operational needs of the school and to minimise the burden on other staff, and to be fair to employees who will be seeking to further their career, the Governing Body will grant leave of absence for interviews as follows:

1. The Headteacher is empowered to approve up to a maximum of 6 days paid leave of absence for interviews, to cover both formal and informal stages of the process, during any one academic year.
2. Further leave of absence for this purpose will normally be agreed and will be on an unpaid basis.
3. The School will allow one day unpaid leave to give the teacher a 'preparation' day at their new school. This will only be granted on days that provide minimal disruption to the running of the school.
4. For support staff any days beyond the initial 6 days could be made up during holiday periods, instead of being on an unpaid basis, provided that their work can be carried out during holiday time.

#### **Unauthorised Absence**

**If an employee takes leave of absence without the prior consent of the Headteacher this may warrant an investigation under the School's Disciplinary procedure.**

## **APPENDIX 1**

### **Holiday entitlement for Local Government Employees**

The leave year runs from the 1 April to the following 31 March. For school based staff working 52 weeks per year leave will normally be taken during the school holidays. Only in exceptional circumstances and with the express consent of the Headteacher can leave be taken at other times or carried forward to the next leave year.

Annual leave is in accordance with the following table (inclusive of 2 extra statutory days).

	<b>Less than 5 Years</b>	<b>5 to 10 Years</b>	<b>10 or more Years</b>	<b>Bank Holidays</b>
Cleaners	16	19	19	8
MSA's (1)	16	16	16	8
SA's & SSA's (2)	16	16	16	8
HA to HB	22	27	27	8
Up to H5	22	27	28	8
H6 to H7	23	27	28	8
H8 to M1	25	27	28	8
Above M1-PM3	27	27	30	8

In addition to the eight public holidays an extra concessionary day will be given around the Christmas period. This will usually be the last working day before Christmas or the first working day after Christmas.

- (1) Minimum entitlement of 24 days in accordance with Working Time Regulations, Inclusive of Bank Holidays
- (2) For staff employed on a casual basis, the minimum entitlement of 24 days is reflected in a higher rate of pay

Staff engaged on a term time only basis will not be permitted to take leave at any other time except during school holiday periods unless express consent from the Headteacher has been given.