



Exeter College

Time off for dependents policy

1. Introduction

The College understands that sometimes during their working lives employees may find it difficult to fulfil domestic, family and working commitments due to their responsibilities outside work. We recognise the anxiety that this may cause, and aim to offer practical help by allowing staff to take time off work to deal with emergencies involving dependents.

The following document sets out our policy on time off to care for dependents. This policy is not contractual but sets out the way in which we plan to manage this. If you have any questions about this policy or about any other aspects of dependent care rights you should contact the HR Officer.

2. Scope of this policy

This policy applies to all employees, including those on fixed-term contracts.

3. Aims of this policy

This policy aims to explain the statutory rights to time off for dependents and the process that should be followed by employees who wish to take such leave.

4. Legal considerations

The following pieces of legislation apply to this policy:

- the Employment Rights Act 1996

5. Definitions

A dependent is a parent, spouse, civil partner, child or someone who lives with the employee as part of the family or who reasonably relies on the employee for care in the event of illness or injury.

6. Time off for dependents

Employees have a right to take reasonable time off (unpaid) in the case of emergencies relating to a dependent. This right applies to all employees irrespective of their length of service or hours worked.

Employees have the right to time off as follows:

- to help when a dependent is ill or injured
- to cope when the arrangements for caring for a dependent unexpectedly break down
- when a dependent gives birth
- when a dependent dies
- to deal with an unexpected incident involving a dependent child during school hours or on a school trip.

This policy is non-contractual – it does not form part of your terms and conditions of employment.

Page 1 of 2	Version 2.0	Effective from 1 January 2016	Last reviewed October 2015
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Time off to attend a funeral, or to carry out executorial duties, would normally be taken as compassionate leave (see Employee Handbook).

Employees should note that there is no legal definition of 'reasonable', and no legal limit on the duration of this leave. However, the extent of the time off is intended to be only for as long as it takes to make arrangements for other care provisions to come into play. If, for example, a child is ill, the extent of the time off provision is to arrange care, not to stay at home to look after the child until he/she is well again.

It is expected that one day will be sufficient in most cases to make alternative arrangements.

7. Time off for dependents - taking leave

Employees may only exercise the right to take time off to care for dependents if they tell their Head of Department or line manager about the reasons for time off. Where possible they should do so beforehand, but if this is not possible, notification should be as soon as reasonably possible. Failure to inform their Head of Department or line manager could lead to disciplinary action under our disciplinary procedure for absence without leave.

Where employees need time off for arrangements which are planned in advance (e.g. to take someone to hospital for a check-up), they should normally book this as holiday or other authorised time off.

8. Terms and conditions of employment

Time off for dependents is unpaid.

During any time off for dependents employees will remain bound by their duty of good faith to Exeter College and their duty not to disclose confidential information.

They remain employed during any time off for dependents, maintain unbroken continuity of service, and also continue to accrue statutory holiday entitlement.

9. Monitoring and review of this policy

This policy will be reviewed on a regular basis, and additionally whenever there are relevant changes in statutory requirements.

Any queries or comments about this policy should be addressed to the HR Officer.

10. Related policies

We also have the following related policies:

- Maternity, adoption, paternity and shared parental leave
- Flexible working
- Parental leave

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Page 2 of 2	Version 2.0	Effective from 1 January 2016	Last reviewed October 2015
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