

Carers Leave Policy

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Date: 2/10/25

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Date of Board Approval: 6/10/25

Review date: 9/9/26

Red Balloon Educational Trust's Vision and Core Values

Red Balloon Educational Trust (RBET) provides a robust academic education, wellbeing and therapy, and social re-engagement programme for young people aged 11 -21, out of school due to bullying, trauma and/or mental ill-health. The overall aims of our provision are that students will regain their self-esteem, get back on an academic track, and return to mainstream education, and that employees are given opportunities for personal and professional development.

Our Vision

To provide the Red Balloon Recovery Programme to more of the young people who self-exclude from school; to employ well-trained employees to support that programme.

Our Values

- Inclusivity
- Negotiating the Curriculum
- Student Voice
- Unconditional Positive Regard

RBET fully supports the independence and distinguishing characteristics of its Learner Centres, each of which is committed to the Red Balloon vision and values.

RBET is committed to supporting its Learner Centres for the benefit of the communities that they serve. RBET expects the Centres to work together and provides a strong, responsible foundation enabling them to develop and grow, offering the best possible learning experiences for their students.

1. Introduction

RBET prides itself in being supportive of carers. This policy outlines the support provided to individuals who take on the role of caring for a family member, partner, or friend.

1.1 Definition of a Carer

A carer is anyone, including children and adults, who looks after someone needing assistance due to illness, frailty, disability, mental health issues or addiction. The care they provide is unpaid.

Their responsibilities can vary widely, from practical tasks like personal care to emotional support to cope with mental health symptoms.

The Trust recognises the importance of supporting carers and ensuring their rights are protected during their caring duties.

All employees have the right to request carer's leave and to have their request considered seriously by the Trust, from day 1 of employment.

2. Principles

The provisions of this policy do not rule out other options such as temporary changes to working patterns, changing hours of work, changing shifts, taking unpaid leave, annual leave and other flexible working arrangements.

An individual is not required to serve a qualifying period in order to be able to take time off in an emergency.

Carer's leave relies upon the carer's relationship with the person being cared for. examples can include (but are not limited to) parents, sons and daughters including adoptive and step families and / or friends.

Individuals are entitled to one week of carer's leave during any period of 12 months.

This leave will be unpaid.

The entitlement for carer's leave depends on the person being cared for having a long-term care need. This is defined as a long-term illness or injury (physical or mental health) that requires, or is likely to require, care for more than three months, a disability as defined under the Equality Act 2010, or issues related to old age.

This leave may also be used to support an individual who is caring for someone with a terminal illness.

Carer's leave may be used for providing care, or making arrangements for the provision of care, for a dependant who requires long-term care.

This leave may be taken flexibly, either in individual days or half days up to a block of one working week.

3. How to take carer's leave

Employees can take up to one week of leave every 12 months. A 'week' means the length of time they usually work over seven days. For example, if someone usually works three days a week, they can take three days of carer's leave.

They can either take a whole week off or take individual days or half days throughout the year.

If an employee needs to care for more than one person, they cannot take a week of carer's leave for each dependant. They can only take one week every 12 months. They can use the week of leave for more than one dependant.

If an employee is a parent, they can take up to 18 weeks' leave to look after their child. ***This is separate from carer's leave.***

Employees need to give their employer notice before they want their leave to start.

If the request is for half a day or a day, the notice period must be at least three days. If the request is for more than one day, the notice period must be at least twice as long as the requested leave. For example, if the request is for two days, the notice period must be at least four days. The notice period needs to be in full days, even if the request includes half-day amounts. The request does not have to be in writing. Employees do not need to give evidence of their dependant's care needs.

When employers can delay carer's leave

Employers cannot refuse a carer's leave request but can ask the employee to take it at a different time. They can only do this if the employee's absence would cause serious disruption to the organisation. If they delay it, the employer must:

- agree another date within one month of the requested date for the leave.
- put the reason for the delay and new date in writing to the employee within seven days of the original request, and before the requested start date of the leave.

Additional Information

This policy complies with the following legislation, policy and guidance:

- Employment Rights Act 1996
- Carer's Leave Act 2024