



Policy and Procedure: Annual Leave and Leave of Absence Policy

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Red Balloon Educational Trust's Vision and Core Values

Red Balloon Educational Trust (RBET) provides a robust programme of academic education, wellbeing and therapy, and social re-engagement for young people aged 11 -21 who are out of school due to bullying, trauma and/or mental ill-health. The overall aims of the Red Balloon Learner Centres are that students will regain their self-esteem, get back on an academic track, and return to mainstream education, and that the staff 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 aims and values of Red Balloon whilst adhering to those of its own.

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 and Aim of Policy

- 1.1 Where possible it is expected that all staff will try to arrange appointments and other matters that may require leave of absence requests, outside of RBET working hours or during the holiday periods. However, it is recognised that the nature of the working day and terms limits the flexibility of staff to take leave for personal reasons.
- 1.2 It is also important to bear in mind that requests for leave must be considered against the overall working arrangements of the different categories of staff and, in particular, the need for arrangements to be made to cover such absences.

2. Application of the Policy

- 2.1 This policy applies to all RBET employees. It concerns requests for annual leave and other leave which fall outside of those covered under conditions of service, other policies or legislation. Arrangements in respect of adoption leave, maternity leave, parental leave and paternity leave, for example, can be found in the relevant policies.
- 2.2 Reasonable requests for leave will be considered on an individual basis by the Head/Deputy Head of Centre or a member of the Senior Executive. Any subsequent disputes will be resolved through the appropriate appointed person, either Governors or Trustees. Approval or annual leave will not be unreasonably withheld.

3. Procedure

Applications for leave can be made by completing the relevant request form (attached to this policy).

The Trust or Centre should not normally receive any requests from staff to take a holiday within termtime, and any requests within term time should be by exception and will be approved at the discretion of the Head of Centre/line manager. There will be occasions when staff would wish to take leave during term time. Where possible this leave will be granted having given due regard to the exigencies of the service.

*Staff may carry forward a maximum of five annual leave days, where a minimum of 20 days leave have been taken in the current leave year. Any leave carried forward must be taken before 30th June that year and with the prior written consent of the Head of Centre/Senior Executive.

To assist in the planning of annual leave, the management team will consider the times of year when support staff will definitely need to be present and times where there may be more flexibility. Where the management wishes to have a closure

period during the holidays this will be notified to all year-round staff at the beginning of the academic year.

4. Other Leave of Absence

- 4.1 The Trust will comply with any statutory regulations regarding allowance of time off for employees.
- 4.2 The Trust recognises that there may be times when employees will need to take additional time away from work and will comply with any statutory regulations regarding time off for employees.
- 4.3 Employees seeking to take leave of absence must gain approval in advance of the leave commencing, from their line manager/Head of Centre/member of the Senior Executive.
- 4.4 In exceptional circumstances it may be necessary for employees to be absent from work before a request can be made and approved. In those circumstances the request should be made as soon as possible, with approval or non-approval of the request being made retrospectively.
- 4.5 There is no intention to remove any rights previously conveyed to employees. The granting of leave is at the discretion of the Head of Centre/Senior Executive, but approval will not be unreasonably withheld.
- 4.6 Where an employee wishes to challenge a decision, an appeal should be made to the Governors/Trustees.
- 4.7 The granting of leave will be monitored and reviewed on a regular basis to ensure the fair and consistent application of the procedures for all employees.
- 4.8 There may be situations where paid leave is not appropriate, and in this case unpaid leave or time off in lieu arrangements may be considered.

The following are examples of leave of absence which may be requested (this is not an exhaustive list):

- ☐ Bereavement leave
- ☐ Time off to care for dependants
- ☐ Urgent domestic reasons
- ☐ Jury service/witness summons
- ☐ Justice of the Peace (Magistrate) duties
- ☐ Other public duties
- ☐ Personal health and welfare
- ☐ Examination and revision leave
- ☐ Religious observance

- Service in non-regular armed forces/volunteer reserve services

4.10 If an employee takes leave without permission from the Trust, the leave will be considered unauthorised unpaid leave, and may result in disciplinary action, including dismissal, being taken against the employee. Therefore it is important that all employees follow the relevant procedures before taking leave (for whatever reason).

4.11 The Carer's Leave Regulations 2024 came into effect on 6 April 2024. Employees are entitled to unpaid leave to give or arrange care for a 'dependant' who has:

- a physical or mental illness or injury that means they're expected to need care for more than three months
- a disability (as defined in the Equality Act 2010)
- care needs because of their old age

The dependant does not have to be a family member. It can be anyone who relies on them for care. Employees are entitled to carer's leave from their first day of work for their employer, (See Carer's Leave Policy), allowing employees to take a total of one week unpaid leave to care for a dependent with long-term care needs.

5. Carrying leave forward

5.1 Subject to individual circumstances and at the discretion of the leadership, the Trust may allow employees to carry leave forward where sickness has prevented the employee from taking their statutory minimum of leave entitlement.

5.2 The Trust has no obligation to allow employees to carry forward leave, other than in the circumstances outlined above, unless it is outlined in an employee's contract of employment.

5.3 Accrued annual leave will be permitted to be taken for a period of up to 18 months following the year in which it was accrued. [This period should not be shorter than the period in which the leave was accrued (12 months).]

5.4 It is likely that employees accrue leave during their absence. To reduce reductions in pay and 'top up' of any hours not worked during the phased return to work period, employees are given the option to use accrued leave as part of a phased return to work. Employees are not required to do so and any use of leave during phased returns to work will always be with the consent of both the school and the employee.

Special Leave Form

Notes for Completion of this Form

1. This form must be completed whenever a member of staff requires leave of absence from duties, for any reason other than illness or annual leave. In all cases the full circumstances must be given.

- 2.** Section 1 should be completed by the individual and then passed to the line manager / Head of Centre, who then completes Section 2.
- 3.** In cases of sudden bereavement or serious illness of a near relative, and where it is not possible to obtain prior approval, this form should be completed by the Line Manager/Head of Centre.

Appendix 1 – Leave of Absence

1. Section 1 (to be completed by the applicant)

| | | | |
|--|------------|---------------------|--|
| Name: | | Employee No: | |
| Job Title: | | | |
| School/Department: | | | |
| From: | To: | No of Days | |
| Reason for Request: | | | |
| If request for Paternity or Parental Leave, state baby's D.O.B: | | | |

Signed: _____

Date:

Print Name: _____

2. Section 2 (to be completed by the Line Manager/Supervisor)

☐ I approve this request for special leave.

Paid Leave ☐ **Unpaid Leave** ☐ (Please tick the appropriate box)

☐ I do not approve this request for special leave.

| |
|--|
| Any other comments: |
|--|

Signed: _____

Date:

Print Name: _____

Action by Office

SIMS/SAM: ☐ D/BASE: ☐

Signed: _____

Date: