



**THE COMPLETE
EDUCATION SOLUTION**

CREATING UNIQUE JOURNEYS FOR LIFE AND LEARNING

Special Leave Policy

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Thomas Keaney'.

Thomas Keaney, CEO and Schools' Proprietor

Date of next formal review, July 2025

This policy applies to all The Complete Education Solution (TCES) schools and services

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Statement of Intent

TCES recognises the importance of consistency, openness and equality in responding to requests from staff for special leave of absence for family and personal reasons or in order to fulfil professional duties other than those immediately related to employment.

In addition, TCES acknowledges each of our schools and services have diverse operational needs, varying workforce characteristics and different levels of capacity to support the absence of colleagues.

This policy therefore recognises the statutory entitlement to unpaid time off to attend to urgent matters related to dependants which will apply to all employees, as well as best practice in other, non-statutory, areas. It will be for individual Headteachers, Heads of Service and/or Heads of Departments to determine how such arrangements will apply locally, having regard to this framework and the need to demonstrate fair and objective decision-making.

This policy is not exhaustive and there may be occasions when circumstances arise which are not specifically identified in this policy. The decision regarding granting leave of absence in such cases falls to the discretion of the Headteacher, Head of Service or Head of Department and taking HR advice on the individual's unique circumstances, where necessary.

Time Off for Dependants

The Employment Rights Act 1996 provides all employees with the right to take reasonable unpaid time off to deal with certain unexpected or sudden emergencies relating to dependants. TCES also offer up to 4 days paid leave for dependents in a rolling calendar year.

What constitutes a reasonable amount of time off is not specified by the legislation and will depend upon individual circumstances, such as:

- the nature of the incident;
- the closeness and level of dependency in the relationship and
- the availability of anyone else to help with the situation.

Whilst there is no statutory restriction on the number of occasions upon which an employee can exercise this right, the amount of time off taken is nevertheless subject to the consideration of what is reasonable in each circumstance. In most cases, a few hours or a day will suffice to deal with the immediate emergency.

For the purposes of this right, a dependant is an employee's spouse, civil partner, child or parent or another person who lives in the same house as the employee (other than as a tenant, boarder, lodger or employee). In addition, it includes anyone who reasonably relies on the employee for assistance or to make arrangements for care when that person falls ill or is injured or assaulted, and anyone who relies on the employee to arrange the provision of care.

Examples of circumstances when an employee may take time off are:

- if a dependant falls ill, or has been injured or assaulted.
- when a dependant is having a baby.
- to make longer term care arrangements for a dependant who is ill or injured.
- to deal with an unexpected disruption or breakdown of care arrangements for a dependant.
- to deal with an incident involving the employee's child during school hours.

Compassionate Leave

There is no specific statutory right to claim time off work, whether paid or unpaid, on compassionate grounds (except in those circumstances covered by Time Off for Dependants). The Headteacher may, at their discretion, grant special leave of absence (with or without pay) depending on the circumstances of the case.

In considering requests, the Headteacher, Head of Service, Head of Department or line manager will take account of the reason for the request, the likely duration of absence, the employee's length of service, the impact of refusing a request and what cover arrangements can be made for the absence. The following will be used as a guideline, but is not intended to represent a contractual entitlement or the minimum or maximum that will be granted in individual cases:

Type of compassionate leave	For guidance only
Sudden, serious illness of near relative, spouse or child (please speak to the people team for guidance on this)	Up to 3 days' paid leave
Death of a near relative, spouse, partner or child	Up to 4 days' paid leave (from April 2020 2 weeks paid leave for death of a child including still births from 24 weeks for those not entitled to SMP)
Funeral of a near relative, spouse, partner or child	Up to 1 day
Funeral of other relatives, friends or colleagues	Up to 1 day

Depending on the circumstances, a maximum of 10 days with pay may be granted for compassionate reasons.

Wellbeing - TCES Day

TCES offer 1 day paid leave per annum for staff to use for their wellbeing, to attend significant events, or religious festivals. This must be requested a minimum of 4 weeks in advance, and should not be booked during significant school events or on the first or last day of a term.

The operational needs of the school/service will be considered before granting leave and there may be times when the Headteacher, Head of Service, Head of Department will need to refuse a request for leave.

Other Leave

Jury Service

Employees should inform the school and People Team as soon as possible after receiving a summons from the court. TCES will make up the difference between the loss of earnings allowance which may be claimed from the court and the employee's normal pay.

The employee is responsible for claiming the allowance and an equivalent amount will be deducted from the employee's salary. If an employee is not required in court for any reason then the employee should return to work. Any exception to this will be considered by the Headteacher, Head of Service, or Head of Department on a case by case basis.

Upon return, the employee will have a meeting with their line manager for updates to any procedures, events, changes etc that have occurred during their absence and to see if any support in relation to wellbeing particularly where staff have been a juror in an emotionally challenging trial.

If you are selected for a trial that will last longer than the standard two-week period, the employee must inform the school as soon as they are able to.

Medical and Dental Appointments

Employees are encouraged to make medical and dental appointments outside normal working hours and, with routine appointments, this should usually be possible. Where it is not possible to make an appointment outside of normal working hours, or where the appointment is urgent, appointments should be made at the beginning or end of the school day to minimise disruption to students and paid time off for up to two hours to attend medical and emergency dental (only) appointments will be granted at the discretion of the line manager, Headteacher, Head of Service, or Head of Department, from whom permission must be sought in advance. Evidence of appointments may be requested.

Standard dental appointments taken during the school day will be unpaid.

Where an ongoing series of medical appointments has been requested, the Headteacher, Head of Service, or Head of Department or line manager will have discretion to determine whether they will be paid or unpaid.

Attendance of clinics

Attendance at clinics for cancer screening e.g. for cervical, breast or prostate cancer, paid as frequently as required, on the production of appointment letters.

Antenatal Appointments

All pregnant employees have the right to take paid time off to attend antenatal appointments and employees whose partners are pregnant are legally entitled to up to two unpaid appointments. Due to the nature of work in schools where possible these should be made after school hours or the beginning or end of the school day to minimise disruption.

Sabbatical Leave / Career Breaks

TCES does not have a general policy on granting sabbatical leave but each school/service within the organisation may consider any such request on its own merits. Factors which are likely to prove relevant to such consideration will include the purpose and duration of leave, the employee's length of service and the impact of the absence on the school or service. Advice from the People Team should be sought on the terms of such an arrangement, including the impact on the employment relationship, before any request is granted.

Type of leave	Minimum duration	Maximum duration	Conditions
Sabbatical (unpaid)	12 weeks	1 year	At least 7 years' continuous service

Any resignations during these types of leave are subject to the same contractual notice period.

You are still considered an employee whilst on sabbatical leave and terms of contact throughout the leave period would be agreed in advance.

Other Leave Not Covered

If an employee wishes to request time off for a form of leave not covered in this policy, they should approach their Headteacher, Head of Service, or Head of Department in the first instance explaining the circumstances, including when, and for how long, they wish to take leave. Approval is at the joint discretion of the Director of People, Culture & Performance, and Headteacher, Head of Service, or Head of Department, whilst bearing in mind the circumstances and the operational needs of the school/service.

Abuse of Time Off

Abuse of time off which has been requested in accordance with this policy, for example by requesting leave for false reasons, or where leave has been taken or holiday

booked without prior approval will be taken very seriously and will be dealt with in accordance with TCES's disciplinary procedures.

Status of Policy and Review

The content and operation of this policy is reviewed on a regular basis. The policy is discretionary and does not confer any contractual rights. It is expected that each school and service will monitor the use of this policy at a local level and maintain records of special leave taken with or without pay through Cascade (HRIS).