LEAVE OF ABSENCE POLICY

Policy Control/Monitoring

Approved by: **(Position in Organisation)** **Date (dd/mm/yyyy):**	Director of Corporate Services 15/10/2026
Accountability: **(Position in Organisation)**	Head of HR, Wellbeing and Inclusion
Revision Cycle:	Biennial
Brief details of amendments made	• Section 4.2 – Reference to Bereaved Partner's Parental Leave added to policy • Section 4.9 added - Time off for Religious Observance • Equality Impact Assessment Completed

Equality Impact Assessment

The Foundation's commitment is to create a positive culture of respect for all staff and service users and to identify, remove or minimise risks of unlawful discrimination and disadvantage in its policies, functions and activities. As part of its development this document has been assessed in line with The Foundation's Equality Impact Assessment procedure.

Version Control Tracker

Version Number	Date
V 1	November 2019
V 2	January 2022
V 3	April 2024
V 4	June 2024
V 5	March 2025
V 6	October 2026

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1. Introduction

The Percy Hedley Foundation wishes to support employees where they need to take time off from their work duties balanced against the need for the Foundation to minimise any disruption to its operations and the impact on service users that employee absence will create. The policy operates on the basis of mutual trust and co-operation. Any abuse of the policy may lead to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

Whilst some types of leave contained in this document are a statutory entitlement, the Foundation has discretion on how such leave is administered, and in many cases has discretion on the granting of such leave.

Entitlements cited relate to full time, full year employees. Employees who work part time and/or part year will have the same entitlements calculated on a pro rata basis.

Employees who make use of the longer-term leave provisions within this policy are encouraged to keep abreast of vacancies arising within the Foundation during the course of their absence by access to the website or through contact with their line manager.

2. Purpose

The Foundation is committed to equality of opportunity in employment for all its employees and to developing work practices and HR policies that support work-life balance. The Foundation recognises the requirement for fairness, equity and consistency when considering requests for special leave and the purpose of this policy is to provide guidance for employees and managers in dealing with these requests and for decision making purposes.

3. Scope

This policy will apply to all employees employed by the Foundation under a contract of employment.

This policy is entirely non-contractual and does not form part of an employee's contract of employment.

4. Principles

4.1 Adverse Weather

All employees are expected to make every reasonable effort to attend for work during periods of adverse weather conditions such as heavy snow fall or flooding.

If the service is closed, to service users/ pupils, as a result of adverse weather then employees should still attend work unless informed otherwise. Employees may be redeployed to support other services where reasonably possible. Where a service is closed and employees are informed not to attend, they would receive their normal salary.

If employees have made every effort to attend work and are unable to get in, then paid leave may be granted at the discretion of the Head of Service.

4.2 Bereavement Leave

The Foundation will grant a number of days' paid leave in order to support employees to deal with the death of a member of their family.

Each request will be considered depending on the circumstances, the general rule is:

- For close family bereavements (i.e. parents, siblings, spouse) up to 3 days' paid leave will be given.
- For children under 18 or stillbirth over 24 weeks (parental bereavement leave) 2 weeks paid leave will be given.
- Up to 1 day's paid leave would be given for wider family bereavements (grandparents and close family of spouse, parents and siblings).
- For any other bereavement up to ½ day's paid leave would be granted to attend a funeral, at the discretion of the manager.
- For bereaved partners paternity leave please refer to the Paternity Leave Policy

Further leave, paid or unpaid would be considered in exceptional circumstances, at the discretion of the manager.

4.3 Time off for Dependants

In the event of a family emergency involving a dependant, employees are entitled to take a reasonable period in order to provide immediate time-off to deal with unforeseen emergencies. In most circumstances a reasonable amount of time of would be 1 or 2 days however additional leave may be granted in exceptional circumstances.

Statutory entitlement to Dependant Care leave is unpaid however we reserve the right to exercise discretion and to pay individuals dependant on circumstances.
For these purposes, an emergency is defined as any urgent matter, for example serious or sudden illness or injury, which affects a parent, spouse, child or a dependent relative living with the employee.

4.4 Carers Leave

Employees can take time off to help a dependant who needs long-term care. A dependant has a long-term care need if they have a disability as defined under the Equality Act 2010, an illness or injury that is likely to need care for at least 3 months and/or a care need related to old age.

An employee's dependants can include:

- their husband, wife, civil partner or partner

- their child
- their parent
- a person who lives in their household (not tenants, lodgers or employees)
- a person who relies on them for care, such as an elderly neighbour

Employees can take up to 1 week of carer's leave every 12 months. The minimum that can be taken in one period is a half day. If an employee needs to care for more than one dependant, they can still only take one week of carer's leave. However they can use the week of leave for more than one dependant.

This leave would be unpaid. Employees must give appropriate notice for their leave, where it is reasonably possible. Notice is as follows;

Number of days requested	**Minimum notice required**
Half a day to 1 day	3 days' notice
1.5 to 2 days	4 days' notice
2.5 to 3 days	6 days' notice
3.5 to 4 days	8 days' notice
4.5 to 5 days	10 days' notice

If the employee's absence would cause serious disruption to the organisation then they may be asked to take their leave at a different time. If this is the case then the Foundation will agree another date within 1 month of the date the employee originally requested leave for and will explain in writing why they need to delay the leave. This should be within 7 days of the request or before the leave starts, whichever is the earlier

If the employee needs to cancel their request for carer's leave, they should do this as soon as possible.

4.5 Time off for Emergencies

The Foundation recognises that employees will from time-to-time experience emergencies at home, such as a flood, fire or burglary. In most circumstances a reasonable amount of time off would be 1 day or less, however additional leave may be granted in exceptional circumstances.

Paid time off under this policy is intended to be for the employee to deal with domestic emergencies. Once the immediate emergency has been taken care of, the employee is expected to return to work or, if further time off is necessary, employees must arrange to take holiday or unpaid leave, subject to the agreement of his/her line manager.

4.6 Time off for Interviews

Paid time off work during normal working hours to attend internal interview will be granted. Employees wishing to attend an interview during normal working hours for a role with an external organisation will need to take this leave as unpaid or annual leave.

4.7 Parental Leave

Employees with parental responsibility for children under the age of 18 may take unpaid parental leave of up to 18 weeks. Employees may not take parental leave in blocks of less than one week (except in relation to a child who is disabled). Employees may not take more than four weeks' leave in respect of any individual child in any year. For further information please refer to the Parental Leave Policy.

4.8 Other Family Leave

The Foundation offers paid leave to eligible employees under the Following policies, please refer to the individual policies or contact your HR Business Partner for more information:

Maternity Policy

Paternity Policy

Adoption Policy

Shared Parental leave Policy

Leave for Fertility Treatment Policy

4.9 Time off for Religious Observance

Whilst there is no statutory right to time off for religious observance the Foundation aims to handle all requests fairly and will consider all requests in accordance with the needs of the business at the time of the request.

Employee can request time of as Annual Leave or Unpaid Leave and will be required to provide reasonable notice of their request in accordance with section 4.15 of this policy

4.10 Further or Higher Education (FHE) Programmes/ Study Leave

In order to support staff to achieve qualifications relevant to their current job role and as part of their career development, the Foundation agrees to give consideration to facilitate attendance, study and examination leave for a FHE programme agreed and supported by the organisation.

Leave of absence with pay will be granted for an approved FHE programme including attendance, study and examination leave and will form part of the learning contract agreed between the individual and the Foundation. Further details can be found in the Foundation’s Learning & Development Policy, including guidance on leave entitlements.

For unrelated examinations and study leave this would typically be unpaid leave at the discretion of the line manager.

4.11 Court Appearances /Jury Service

Where an employee is directed to attend for Jury Service or attend court as a witness, they should notify their manager immediately to request time off work. In requesting time off, an employee should provide a copy of the court summons. An individual's salary will continue to be paid during any absence for jury service ore court appearance. If on any day the employee's services are not required at the court they shall return to work for that day.

Employees attending court will be required to update their managers as to the likely duration.

In exceptional circumstances where the employees absence would cause undue operational difficulties to the service, the manager may require the employee to request that the jury service is delayed.

4.12 Medical Appointments

Appointments for GP, optical, dental, orthopaedic or other medical treatment should be arranged outside normal working hours. Where this is not possible unpaid leave may be granted at the discretion of the line manager. Alternatively, employees may make the time up where possible.

Paid leave will be granted for hospital or consultant appointments. If an employee requires a number of successive hospital appointments they should, wherever possible, try and arrange subsequent appointments at either the start of or at the end of the working day.

Employees will be expected to take unpaid time off or holidays for any hospital appointments arranged for non-preventative treatments e.g. cosmetic surgery.

Employees wishing to take time off to attend medical appointments for their children/ parent/spouse must arrange to take holiday or unpaid leave, subject to the agreement of his/her line manager.

4.13 Public Duties

Where an employee holds a public office or public position, it is the Foundation's policy to grant up to 5 days paid leave per annum so that the employee can perform the duties associated with that position. Additional time off will be required to be taken as unpaid leave or annual leave.

Employees should provide written notification to their manager of any dates on which they wish to take time off work for public duties, stating the expected length of their absence.

In accordance with the Employment Rights Act 1996, the public duties provisions of this policy cover membership of the following public bodies:

- a local authority (e.g. a local councillor);
- a statutory tribunal (e.g. an Employment Tribunal);

- a police authority;
- the Service Authority for the National Criminal Intelligence Service or the Service Authority for the National Crime Squad;
- a board of prison visitors or a prison visiting committee;
- a relevant health body;
- a relevant education body (e.g. a member of the managing or governing body of an educational establishment or General Teaching Council);
- the Environment Agency, the Scottish Environment Protection Agency or a relevant Scottish water and sewerage authority.

4.14 Voluntary Reserve Forces

If an employee is a serving member of the Territorial Army (TA) or a similar branch of the Armed Forces Reserve, he or she must notify the Foundation of this fact on or before commencement of employment. He or she may take up to 5 days paid leave of absence to attend TA activities. Employees will be required to take annual or unpaid leave for any further leave. Approval must be sought before an employee confirms availability.

Compulsory mobilisation cannot be refused but application may be made for an exemption, deferral or revocation if the employee's absence is likely to have a serious impact on the Foundation or service area. Application for leave must be made within 7 days of the employee's receipt of the mobilisation notice. Reservists will normally be given 28 days' notice of mobilisation and the maximum period for mobilisation is 12 months.

An employee who volunteers for mobilisation must seek prior agreement from the Foundation. The Foundation is not obliged to give consent for voluntary mobilisation.

4.15 Requesting a Leave of Absence

Employees are required to give at least four weeks' notice of any proposed holiday dates which would be approved by your line manager via the HR system. No more than ten days' holiday may be taken at any one time unless prior consent is obtained from an individual's line manager. No more than five days of untaken holiday entitlement can be carried forward from one holiday year to the following holiday year unless a period of statutory maternity, paternity or adoption leave or long term sickness absence has prevented the leave from being taken.

It is acknowledged that situations may arise where it is not possible for employees to request special leave in advance. In such situations employees must notify their manager (or where this is not possible, an appropriate deputy) at the earliest opportunity, confirming the reason for their absence, and how much time off work they may need.

The manager should verbally agree the leave arrangements and ensure a request is submitted on the HR system.

All reasonable requests for special leave will be given due consideration, however, if it is not possible to grant requests due to service requirements and an employee subsequently does not attend work, this may be classified as unauthorised absence and unpaid. Unauthorised absence may also be regarded as misconduct and may be managed under the Foundation's Disciplinary Procedure.

5. Monitoring and Compliance

Overall responsibility for the operation of this policy and procedure lies with the HR Manager. The effectiveness of the policy and procedure will be formally reviewed and monitored at least on a biennial basis to ensure that it continues to meet the requirements of The Foundation and that it reflects HR good practice and statutory legislation as appropriate.

6. Associated Policies and References

Attendance Management Policy
Disciplinary Procedure
Grievance Policy
Parental Leave Policy
Maternity Policy
Paternity Policy
Adoption Policy
Shared Parental leave Policy
Leave for Fertility Treatment Policy