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## Leave Policy (Academic Staff)

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Date of Last Review: 31.08.2025
Date of Next Review: 01.09.2026

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## 1. Introduction

Academic staff at Reigate Grammar School Riyadh (RGSR) are entitled to leave as set out in the policy below.

## 2. Types of Leave

### 2.1 Holiday and Annual Leave

Staff are entitled to school holidays as described in the school calendar. In general, these holidays are Friday and Saturday; official holidays as specified by the Government; other holidays as specified by the school. All holidays are paid.

### 2.2 Sick Leave

Staff are entitled to paid sick leave as listed below:

- Teachers: 10 working days per academic year;
- Teaching Assistants, SEN Assistants and Learning Support Assistants: 5 working days per academic year.

Sick leaves not used may not be credited to a subsequent academic year. Sick leave days are not reimbursable upon termination of service. A staff member who is employed for part of a year, and/or on a part-time basis, is entitled to sick leave in proportion to the period for which he is employed.

It is important that a staff member makes their line manager and/or a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) aware of any underlying medical factor(s) or condition(s) that impacts on their ability to perform their role.

#### Sick Leave Procedure

1. If a staff member is going to be away from work due to sick leave, they should notify the appropriate member of SLT (Head of School) via telephone call by 6:15am on the day of absence.
2. Teachers should email their planning to their line manager and inform them of any duties/activities that might require cover. This email should also be sent to [cover@rgs.edu.sa](mailto:cover@rgs.edu.sa).
3. The sick staff member should keep their line manager informed daily regarding their progress and any changes to the likely duration of the period of absence, and therefore their expected date to return to work. Failure to do so may result in financial penalty.
4. A Leave Form must be completed upon return to school for every absence resulting from sickness. Failure to do so may result in financial penalty.
5. If any staff member is sick for two or more consecutive school days, the staff member must provide a certificate from an approved medical practitioner verifying the illness and stating when the staff member is fit to return to work. If a medical certificate is not produced as required, the absence from employment may be counted as unpaid leave at a rate of two days basic salary for every one day of sick leave and disciplinary action may be taken against the staff member. This is at the discretion of the Head of School.
6. A medical certificate is required if a staff member takes sick leave both on a Thursday and Sunday. Similarly, if returning from a school holiday, or prior to a school holiday, a medical certificate is required for medical leave. If a medical certificate is not produced, it could be considered a breach of professional conduct. The absence from employment may be counted as unpaid leave and disciplinary action may be taken against the staff member, which may include verbal or written warning, deduction of pay or suspension. This is at the discretion of the Head of School.
7. If the accumulated individual sick leave days taken by a staff member (which don't require a medical certificate) reaches a total of five days, the Head of School may request a medical certificate for each subsequent absence, regardless of duration.

8. If staff absence exceeds entitlement, salary will be deducted for every additional sick day taken. This may be at a rate of one day basic salary for every one day of sick leave, or at a rate of two days basic salary for every one day of sick leave exceeding the entitlement. This will be at the discretion of the Head of School.

#### 2.2.1 Elective Surgery

For avoidance of doubt, elective surgery does not qualify for sick leave, but rather shall be considered, unless otherwise required by law, as unpaid leave. As such, elective surgery should be undertaken during school holidays to ensure that the staff member does not miss a working day at the school.

#### 2.2.2 Appointments

Staff members should do all they can to schedule medical appointments outside of school hours. At the discretion of the head of School, where such appointments cannot reasonably be made outside of school hours, at the weekend or during holidays, staff members may be required to take unpaid leave or requested to use their sick leave or personal leave entitlement for medical appointments.

#### 2.2.3 Prohibited Activities whilst on Sick Leave

Staff members must do all they can do to ensure a speedy return to good health and to work. Certain activities are prohibited during sick leave unless medical evidence is produced suggesting that these activities have been recommended by the employee's doctor/consultant as an aid to recovery. If prohibited activities are undertaken, it may jeopardise and/or may result in disciplinary action. These activities include:

- Participation in activities which are inconsistent with their certified reasons for being absent from work;
- Any other activity that may aggravate their condition.

It should be noted that staff members who undertake the following activities whilst on sick leave will be subject to disciplinary action and payment of paid sick leave will be withdrawn:

- Undertaking any other employment;
- Going on holiday or attending an event.

### 2.3 Child Care Sick Leave

Staff members are entitled to claim 3 days against their paid sick leave entitlement if they need to take care of their sick child(ren). This only applies to his/her own child(ren) and does not apply to other relatives. The same procedure should be followed, and the same regulations apply as above (2.2.1 Sick Leave Procedure). At the discretion of the Head of School, if the staff member exceeds 3 childcare sick leave days it may be considered unpaid leave.

### 2.4 Bereavement Leave

Staff members are entitled to 5 days paid bereavement leave if it is an immediate family member (Parents, Grandparents, Siblings, Husband/Wife and Children only). Evidence such as copies of death certificates might be requested.

If staff absence exceeds entitlement, salary may be deducted for every additional bereavement leave day taken at a rate of one day basic salary for every one day of bereavement leave exceeding the entitlement. This will be at the discretion of the Head of School.

A Leave Form must be completed prior to or upon return from bereavement leave. Failure to do so may result in financial penalty.

## 2.5 Maternity Leave

All pregnant employees, who have remained in continuous service for two academic years or more, are entitled to paid maternity leave. Staff members who remained in continuous service for less than two academic years are entitled to unpaid maternity leave.

Maternity leave entitlements are twelve weeks of paid leave (taken continuously) and an option to select the start date. Requests for unpaid leave of up to six weeks will only be approved if taken continuously with the paid leave period.

Staff members may choose the date on which they commence maternity leave if they notify the school of the following by the 15th week before the EWC (Expected Week of Childbirth):

- The fact that you are pregnant;
- The date of the EWC;
- The intended start date of maternity leave.

Staff members must also provide a letter from their doctor confirming the pregnancy.

A Leave Form must be completed, and the school will reply to the employee to inform her of the date by which she is expected to return to work if she takes her full leave entitlement.

The employee can change the start date of maternity leave providing the school is provided 28 days' notice. If it is not reasonably practicable to give this much notice, for example if the baby is born early and leave must start early, then the employee does not have to give the above notice but should give the school as much notice as is reasonably possible.

Maternity leave cannot start any earlier than 11 weeks before the EWC, unless the baby is born early and maternity leave starts automatically.

A pregnancy related illness during or after the 4th week before the EWC automatically triggers maternity leave.

Maternity leave will not be treated as sick leave and will not therefore be taken into account for the calculation of the period of entitlement to sickness leave.

Upon returning to work, staff members are entitled to any salary increases or enhanced benefits that are introduced in their absence.

## 2.6 Paternity Leave

If you are the father, you may be entitled to paid paternity leave. Staff members will only be entitled to paid paternity leave if they have remained in continuous service at Reigate Grammar School Riyadh (RGSR) for two academic years or more prior to the due date of the baby. Staff members who remained in continuous service for less than two academic years are entitled to unpaid paternity leave.

Paid paternity leave will be for a period of up to 3 working days. Unpaid paternity leave (should a staff member have remained in continuous service for less than two academic years) will be for the same duration. Following discussion with the Head of School, employees might be granted an additional 2 working days of unpaid paternity leave. The total amount of leave permitted is per pregnancy, regardless of how many children are born. The days taken must be consecutive.

A Leave Form must be completed, and staff members must inform the school no later than the 15th week before the baby is due. Paternity leave must be taken within 56 days of the birth, (or, if the birth is early, any time between birth and 56 days after the date the baby was due).

Employees can change their mind about the date on which they want their paternity leave to start providing they tell the school at least 28 days in advance.

## 2.7 Emergency Leave

On occasion, staff members may be required to take leave in response to an emergency. This may be an emergency involving a dependent; such as helping when a dependent gives birth, is injured or assaulted.

Staff members are permitted two days emergency leave per academic year which will usually be paid. Any additional emergency leave will be unpaid. The granting of emergency leave, including over two consecutive days, and if emergency leave is paid or unpaid, is at the discretion of the Head of School. Evidence may be requested.

A Leave Form must be completed upon return from emergency leave. Failure to do so may result in financial penalty.

## 2.8 Exam Leave

Staff members may claim two days per academic year for exams. Exam leave is paid.

A Leave Form must be submitted a minimum of 10 working days prior to the dates requested and evidence of scheduled examinations must be attached.

If more leave is required staff can make a personal case with the Head of School. If additional leave is granted, salary may be deducted for every additional exam leave day taken at a rate of two days basic salary for every one day of leave exceeding the entitlement. This will be at the discretion of the Head of School.

## 2.9 CPD Leave

RGSR is firmly committed to supporting staff members with their continuous professional development (CPD). As such, staff members can request leave for CPD. The granting and duration of CPD leave is at the discretion of the Head of School, as is the granting of paid or unpaid CPD leave.

A Leave Form must be submitted a minimum of 10 working days prior to the dates requested and evidence of the CPD must be attached.

## 2.10 Personal Leave

Staff members are entitled to two days of paid personal leave per academic year. Examples of when paid personal leave might be required are embassy appointments and medical appointments which cannot be scheduled outside of school hours; engagement, wedding, christening or graduation ceremonies of an immediate family member.

A Leave Form must be submitted a minimum of 10 working days prior to the dates requested with a clear explanation of the reason personal leave is required. The school may ask for evidence to be provided.

The decision to grant paid personal leave is at the discretion of the head of School. Personal leave will not usually be granted for two consecutive days, however under exceptional circumstances and with sufficient evidence, it may be granted. This will be at the discretion of the Head of School.

## 2.11 Unpaid Leave

For academic staff with long school holidays and the necessary commitment to teaching, the expectation is that they will be in school each day that the school is in session. Unpaid leave is strongly discouraged, and the presumption always has to be that such additional time off will not be sought or allowed.

However, the school does recognise that a request for unpaid leave may be justified in extraordinary circumstances. The following categories of requests may be granted at the Head of School's discretion, where the proposed time lost is considered reasonable, and sufficient notice is given:

- Requests arising from a close family crisis;
- Requests concerning legal or other formal processes involved with living and working in KSA;
- Requests associated with a close personal friend;
- Requests concerning significant personal events, or those of their direct family.

RGSR recognises that there may be some additional situations that staff cannot avoid. At the discretion of the Head of School other requests which do not fall within the above categories may also be granted.

A Leave Form must be submitted a minimum of 10 working days prior to the dates requested with a clear explanation of the reason unpaid leave is required. The school may ask for evidence to be provided.

When making a decision as to if unpaid leave will be granted, the schools' first consideration is whether time off can be justified. The following will be taken into account when considering a request for unpaid leave. The list is not intended to be exhaustive or prescriptive:

- a) the reason why absence has been sought and the potential effects of not granting leave of absence;
- b) whether alternative arrangements could be made, such as someone else helping;
- c) whether an alternative day could be arranged;
- d) whether all has been done to minimise the actual time away from school;
- e) the past attendance record of the employee and any other requests that have been granted;
- f) whether it is possible to arrange cover, either internal or external, and the possible effects on students of the disruption.

The reason for these considerations is so that the school can act reasonably against the expectation that the employee will do all that he/she can to avoid situations that could cause absence. The school's overriding priority has to be to the education of the students and interruption to the continuity of teaching will be avoided wherever it reasonably can.

The Head of School is most likely to grant unpaid leave to someone with an outstanding attendance record who has not had similar grants in the past and whose cause for application is unarguable.

### 3. Expectations of Staff Member on Leave

It is expected that the staff member on leave will have all planning and resources prepared prior to his/her absence. If the leave is scheduled (e.g. the teacher has an appointment to attend immigration), the teacher should leave additional notes for the cover teacher and/or contact the cover teacher in advance to ensure all information is handed over. If the leave is scheduled, the teacher on leave should also contact the parents of his/her class prior to the date of leave to inform them of his/her absence.

If a staff member knows he/she will miss their ECA and/or duty, it is the responsibility of the staff member who will be on leave to arrange cover in advance. Planning and resources should be prepared for the ECA by the staff members on leave. The expectation is that whichever staff member covers the ECA and/or duty will be 'paid back' by the staff member on leave in the coming weeks. For example, the staff member on leave will do the other staff members ECA during a future week.

In the event of emergency leave or sick leave, which is therefore unplanned, the school will arrange cover for lessons, ECAs and duties, as required. This is the responsibility of their relevant line manager and either the Prep or Secondary ECA Coordinator. The expectation will remain that whichever staff member covers the ECA and/or duty will be 'paid back' by the staff member on leave in the coming weeks.

For emergency leave and sick leave, the line manager should contact parents in the specific class to inform them that the staff member will not be in school and reassure them that cover will be provided.

It is the overall responsibility of the Head of Prep and Head of Secondary to ensure all classes and duties are covered appropriately and that those staff members providing cover are correctly briefed.

### 4. Accrual

Leave may not be accrued or carried forward. A staff member may not and shall not receive compensation in lieu of leave not taken, unless such leave was cancelled at the specific written request of the school.

## 5. General Understanding

Leave may not be taken during the first or last week of any school term or taken immediately prior to, or immediately following, any day upon which the school is closed (for example a weekend), unless such leave is granted by the Head of School under clearly exceptional circumstances. If leave is taken at these times the staff member may be deducted at a minimum rate of two days basic salary for every one day of leave and the staff member may face disciplinary action. Both deductions and disciplinary action will be at the discretion of the Head of School. The exceptions are sick leave (with a valid medical certificate – see 2.2.1 Point 6); emergency leave, maternity leave, paternity leave, and bereavement leave (all with satisfactory accompanying evidence).

A Leave Form must be completed in the event that the staff member wishes to take leave of any kind. With the exception of unexpected sick leave and unexpected emergency leave (when a staff member is not in school to complete the leave form) the leave form should be completed prior to the dates of leave. The staff member requesting leave must have the form signed by both their direct line manager and the appropriate member of SLT (Principal/Head of Prep/Head of Secondary). If a staff member is unsure who should sign their leave form, they should consult HR.

Staff members are expected to provide sufficient notice to the school of their absence. Failure to do so could result in the leave request being denied.

All leave requests should be discussed with the school and confirmed before any arrangements are made or commitments entered into.

Leave requests may be denied by the Head of School when a suitable cover teacher cannot be engaged.