

Dependency Leave Policy

AREA:	PEOPLE SERVICES
AUDIENCE:	ALL EMPLOYEES
REVIEW FREQUENCY:	ANNUALLY
DATE ISSUED:	JUNE 2026
LAST REVIEW DATE:	JUNE 2026
NEXT REVIEW DATE:	JUNE 2027
OWNED & REVIEWED BY:	HEAD OF PEOPLE SERVICES
APPROVED BY:	CHAIR OF BAT BOARD OF TRUSTEES / PEOPLE COMMITTEE
APPROVAL DATE:	17.06.2026

Brunel Academies Trust (BAT) is a company limited by guarantee with registration number 10074054 and registered offices at Unit B4C Orbital Retail Park, Thamesdown Drive, Swindon, SN25 4AN; BAT is the parent company and Sole Corporate Member of the subsidiary company Brunel Education (BE). Brunel Education is a charitable company limited by guarantee with registration number 11991915, registered with the Charities Commission of England Wales (Charity Number 1214820) and with registered offices at Unit B4C Orbital Retail Park, Thamesdown Drive, Swindon, SN25 4AN.

Tier 1 policies are centrally held policies relating to Education, Governance, People Services, Finance, ICT and Operations and are the direct responsibility of BAT. Tier 1 policies are created by the BAT Central Services Team but adopted and reviewed by the BAT Board.

We are committed to a sustainable future and to improving the social, economic, and environmental well-being of the community. We are dedicated to environmental improvements that foster a sustainable future and lead to social and economical improvements in the communities we operate within.

1. Introduction

- 1.1. BAT recognises that employees may occasionally need time away from work to deal with unexpected emergencies involving a dependant. This policy outlines the circumstances in which time off for dependants may be requested and the arrangements that apply.
- 1.2. This policy applies to all employees of BAT. Due to the nature of educational provisions, employees working within Provisions should be aware that absence during term time may have a significant impact on teaching, learning, safeguarding, and service delivery.
- 1.3. A dependant is someone who relies on the employee for care, including:
 - A spouse, partner, or civil partner
 - A child
 - A parent
 - A person living in the employees' household (excluding tenants, lodgers, or borders)
 - Any person who reasonably relied on the employee for assistance in an emergency
- 1.4. This policy sets out the arrangements for requesting time off for dependants, including where leave may be paid or unpaid. Whilst BAT aims to apply the policy fairly and consistently, it cannot cover every individual circumstance. Where clarification or further consideration is required, advice will be sought from the People Services Team.

- 1.5. Employees must notify their Head of Provision/line manager as soon as reasonably practicable where time off for dependants is required, providing sufficient information regarding the reason for the request and the likely duration of the absence.
- 1.6. Requests for time off for dependants will be considered in line with this policy, taking into account the individual circumstances and the operational needs of the Provision or CST. Leave may not be approved where it is not considered reasonable, necessary, or consistent with the purpose of this policy.

2. Time Off for Dependants:

- 2.3. Employees may take up to three separate days' paid time off for dependants within a rolling twelve-month period (September to August) to deal with certain unexpected or sudden emergencies involving a dependant. Where an absence lasts for more than one working day, paid leave (where any entitlement remains) will normally apply to the first day. Any subsequent days within the same absence will be unpaid.
- 2.4. Situations where leave may be taken include:
 - Illness, injury, or assault of a dependant
 - Arranging care for a dependant who is ill or injured
 - Unexpected disruption or breakdown in care arrangements
 - Dealing with an incident involving a child at school
- 2.5. Time off for dependants is strictly intended for unforeseen emergencies. It should not be used in situations which are:
 - Known in advance or reasonably foreseeable
 - Ongoing or recurring in nature without attempts to secure alternative arrangements
 - Relating to planned appointments or routine care
- 2.6. Any additional periods of dependant leave beyond the paid entitlement will be unpaid. Time off for dependants is intended to allow employees reasonable time to deal with an immediate emergency and to make any necessary longer-term arrangements for the dependant. There is no minimum service requirement for this entitlement.
- 2.7. In most cases, one day is sufficient to deal with an emergency. For example:
 - If a child falls unwell, the amount of time off would be sufficient to allow the employee to cope with the immediate care of the child, for example arranging a doctor's appointment or making longer term care arrangements.
- 2.8. Where a request is made for a longer period of time, the Head of Provision/line manager must consider the individual circumstances and must consider the following:
 - what arrangements the employee needs to make and how long these would reasonably take;
 - whether there are exceptional circumstances which may justify additional time off, for example where the dependant lives some distance away; and
 - the frequency, duration and pattern of previous dependant leave requests.
- 2.9. This policy is intended to support employees in dealing with unexpected emergencies involving dependants and is not intended to provide ongoing or indefinite time away from work. In deciding whether further requests for time off for dependants are reasonable and necessary, line managers should consider the number and length of previous absences, as well as the dates when they occurred. For example:

- if an employee's child suffers from an underlying medical condition which is likely to suffer regular relapses, such a situation no longer falls under the time off for dependants' provisions as the need for absence may no longer be considered unforeseen or temporary in nature.

2.10. BAT recognises that emergencies involving dependants can arise from time to time. However, repeated or excessive use of time off for dependants may indicate underlying issues that require further consideration and may have a significant impact on education, service delivery, safeguarding arrangements, colleagues, and the operational effectiveness of the Provision or CST.

3. Limits and Monitoring

3.1. BAT will monitor the use of time off for dependants across the year to ensure it is used appropriately and in line with its intended purpose.

3.2. Whilst there is no statutory limit on unpaid time off for dependants, levels of absence which are frequent, patterned, or exceed what is considered reasonable for emergency situations will be subject to review.

3.3. Where concerns arise regarding the frequency, duration, or pattern of dependant leave, BAT will discuss these concerns with the employee and consider whether alternative arrangements or supportive measures may be appropriate, for example flexible working arrangements, annual leave, parental leave, unpaid leave, or temporary adjustments.

3.4. A review may be initiated where:

- An employee exceeds the paid entitlement and takes multiple additional unpaid days;
- There are repeated instances within a short timeframe (e.g. more than 3 occasions in one term)
- A pattern emerges
- Absence impacts service delivery, safeguarding, or team workload.

3.5. Employees are expected to take reasonable steps to put in place appropriate longer-term care arrangements where ongoing dependant issues arise. Where repeated or excessive absence cannot be reasonably justified as emergency leave, or where employees fail to take reasonable steps to manage ongoing situations, the matter may be escalated under the Supporting Your Attendance Policy or, where appropriate, the Disciplinary Policy.

4. Employee Responsibility

4.1. Employees are expected to;

- Take reasonable steps to arrange appropriate and sustainable care arrangements;
- Minimise disruption to their work wherever possible;
- Consider alternative support networks where available;
- Use other appropriate leave options where the need is ongoing or foreseeable.
- Failure to demonstrate reasonable efforts to make alternative arrangements may result in requests being declined.

5. Managers Discretion

5.1. Line managers reserve the right to refuse or limit requests where:

- The request does not meet the criteria for emergency dependant leave;
- The level or pattern of absence is considered excessive;
- Approval would result in significant operational or safeguarding risk.

Any refusal will be clearly explained to the employee. If leave is still taken without approval, then this will be managed through the Trusts Disciplinary Policy.

6. Returning to Work

6.1. Following periods of time off for dependants, particularly where there is a pattern of absence, managers may hold a return-to-work discussion to:

- Review the circumstances of the absence;
- Confirm whether the policy has been applied appropriately;
- Identify any ongoing support or alternative arrangements required.

7. Related policies

- Leave of Absence Policy
- Supporting Your Attendance Policy
- Capability Policy
- Disciplinary Policy

This policy has been approved by the People Committee and adopted by the BAT Board of Trustees. The policy will be reviewed every year or earlier if change to legislation.

Signed on behalf of the BAT Board of Trustees:

Signed:



CEO

Signed:



Chair of BAT Board of Trustees

Date: 17.06.2026