



Time Off Guidance

Introduction

West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC) prides itself on being an employer of choice. With an incredibly varied role in delivering the very best for our residents, communities and businesses, our employees are committed and really make a difference. In return we seek to support and empower our employees, to give their best.

We recognise the importance of helping our employees balance their work and home life. The Council offers flexible working arrangements that enable staff to balance their working life with other priorities, including parental and other caring responsibilities, life-long learning, charity work, leisure activities and other interests. In turn it recognises that staffing levels must at all times remain in line with the demands of our customers and operational requirements.

This guidance outlines the different types of leave available and the scope of each type of leave that are not covered by a relevant policy. Please read this policy in conjunction with other policies available on the portal covering time off.

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Emergency Leave

The Council recognises that employees will from time to time experience emergencies at home, such as a flood, fire or burglary. Emergency leave is intended to allow those who experience genuine domestic emergencies to take a reasonable amount of time off work to deal with the emergency. This does not apply to planned events such as domestic repairs, refurbishment, building or trades work, installation of appliances, home deliveries, etc.

In the event of a domestic emergency arising, the employee should notify their manager as soon as it is reasonably practicable (either face-to-face if the employee is at work or otherwise by telephone), explaining the nature of the emergency and how much time off work the employee thinks they will need.

Unpaid time off under emergency leave 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, to arrange to take it as paid or unpaid leave, subject to the agreement of their line manager.

Qualification Study Leave

Where training is work related, each Line Manager is authorised to allow three days paid leave of absence in a leave year for the purpose of revision for examinations.

In addition, staff will be allowed paid leave of absence for the day(s) of the examination(s).

Time Off for Religious Observance

Employees whose religious duties are not covered by weekends and current statutory bank holidays may need time away from work. The Council where possible, will allow annual leave to be taken when an important religious occasion is to be celebrated provided that reasonable notice is given.

Where possible time off for prayer will be accommodated under the flexi-time scheme, this should be discussed and agreed as soon as reasonably practical.

Time Off for Elections

Subject to business need the Council employees will be given paid time off on the day of an election to assist partner councils to undertake election duties. Any other time outside of the day of the election (e.g. count postal votes, canvassing) must be taken as annual leave or flexi.

This must be agreed with your line manager in advance. Time taken will need to be recorded on Business World.

Volunteering

The Council will allow employees to take two days per annum additional paid leave for volunteering. This must be agreed with your line manager in advance. Time taken will need to be recorded on Business World.

Public Duties

Examples of public duties include Justices of the Peace, School Governors, Jury Service and Retained Fire Fighters. All employees are eligible and the amount of time off will vary according to the type of public duty. Any time off granted will be reasonable and must be agreed with the line manager. Where an allowance is claimable for loss of earnings, you must claim and repay the money to the council. Your manager can refuse to grant time off if it can be shown that it will have a detrimental effect on the Council's services. The leave is paid as long as time lost is generally made up through using holiday or flexi time.

Career Break/Sabbatical

It may be possible, subject to business needs and personal circumstances, for employees to be permitted to take a period of unpaid leave from the business. For more information please speak to your HR Business Partner and Line Manager.

Special Leave

Special leave may be agreed by Senior Management, either with or without pay. Other types of leave must be exhausted first. Employees with 12 month's service are eligible and must put the request in writing to Senior Management outlining the reasons for requesting the leave.

The Recording of Time Off

Any time off must be correctly recorded and approved within Business World. Any queries relating to this, please speak to your manager or HR Support who will be pleased to help.

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