



Exeter College

CARERS LEAVE POLICY

1. PURPOSE

Exeter College (Oxford) recognises the challenges that carers face while trying to balance the demands of caring, work, and looking after their own health and wellbeing. We are committed to supporting staff who maintain their responsibilities as a carer alongside their job, as far as is practicable.

The purpose of this policy is to provide information to employees about their statutory right to request to take time off work to provide or arrange care for a dependant with a long-term care need.

2. ELIGIBILITY

All employees are eligible for Carer's Leave if they:

- have commenced their employment at the College (there is no length of service requirement);
- are caring for a dependant with a long-term care need (see definition below); and
- have not already exceeded their entitlement.

The policy does not apply to casual staff, contractors, consultants, or any self-employed individuals working for the College.

3. DEFINITIONS

In the context of Carer's leave, a dependant means:

- a spouse, civil partner, child or parent;
- any person who lives in the same household as the employee (other than as a lodger, tenant, boarder, or employee); or
- any person who would reasonably rely on the employee to provide or arrange care.

A dependant has a long-term care need if they:

- have an illness or injury (whether physical or mental) that requires, or is likely to require, care for more than 3 months;
- have a condition that amounts to a disability under the Equality Act 2010; or
- require care for a reason connected to their old age.

The statutory right to Carer's Leave applies to a wide range of caring situations. This might include (but is not limited to) taking a disabled child to a hospital appointment; moving a parent who has dementia into a care home; accompanying a housebound dependant on a day trip; or providing meals and company for an elderly neighbour while their main carer is away with work for the day.

This policy is non-contractual – it does not form part of your terms and conditions of employment.

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Carer's Leave does not, however, extend to general childcare, except where the child meets the definition of a dependant with a long-term care need. If you require time off to care for your child (e.g. in an emergency situation), you should request this under our policy on Time Off to Care for Dependants. Alternatively, you may be able to request time off under our Parental Leave policy.

4. ENTITLEMENT

You will be entitled to up to four working weeks of unpaid leave (pro-rata for part-time staff) in any rolling 12-month period. This represents the statutory minimum of one week's Carer's Leave, plus an enhanced element of up to three weeks which is given at the College's discretion. Further periods of unpaid leave may also be granted at the discretion of the College, subject to operational requirements.

The statutory leave (i.e. up to one week) can be taken in one continuous block, as individual full days, or as half-days.

The enhanced leave (i.e. 2-4 weeks) must normally be taken in blocks of a minimum of one week.

Please note that the amount of Carer's Leave is determined per employee, not per dependant. The entitlement therefore remains the same, regardless of how many dependants you may be caring for.

(For example, an employee who is caring for more than one dependant (e.g. two elderly parents, or a disabled child and an elderly parent) is still only entitled to up to four weeks of Carer's Leave within any rolling 12-month period.)

5. NOTIFICATION

As soon as you are aware of the need to take care-related absence, you should inform your line manager about when you would like the leave to commence, and indicate the expected duration of the leave.

- if the leave request is for a half day or a full day, you must provide notice at least 3 days in advance (the notice must be in full days, even if the request includes half day amounts).
- if you are requesting leave for more than one day, notice must be submitted in advance of at least twice the length of the intended leave period. (For example, if the request is for four days of leave, you must provide notice at least 8 days in advance.)

You are not required to put the request for leave in writing, and nor are you required to provide evidence of the dependant's care needs (if the request is for up to the one week of statutory leave). However, you may do one or both of these things if you wish to do so, and the College may make reasonable enquiries to ensure that the request is genuine where you are requesting between 2 and 4 weeks of leave (i.e. the enhanced element of the scheme).

If you need to cancel your request for Carer's Leave, you should do this as soon as possible. We will consider your request to cancel leave, but we are not required to agree to it.

6. MAKING A DECISION

We will, wherever possible, seek to grant your request in full.

However, there may be times when it would cause serious disruption to the College if you were to take time off work, and in these situations we may ask you to delay your leave and take it at a different time. Normally, this will be within one month of the date that you originally requested leave for.

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If we need to delay your leave, we will let you know within 7 days of your request, or before the leave starts, whichever is sooner.

7. PAY AND BENEFITS DURING LEAVE

Carer's Leave is unpaid, and you will therefore not receive your regular salary during this time.

The employment contract continues during Carer's Leave, unless it is terminated by either the employee or the College. This means that you continue to benefit from your employment rights during Carer's Leave, including holiday accrual.

8. RETURN TO WORK

Employees returning from Carer's Leave will be entitled to return to the same role.

Should you wish to return to work on a different contractual basis, you should discuss this with your line manager and (as appropriate) submit a request under our Flexible Working policy. Where possible, the College will endeavour to accommodate flexible working arrangements for employees who require Carer's Leave, including options such as remote working or adjusted working hours.

9. CONFIDENTIALITY

All information relating to an employee's need for Carer's Leave will be treated confidentially and in accordance with the company's data protection policies.

10. MONITORING AND REVIEW OF THIS POLICY

This policy will be reviewed regularly and will be updated to ensure compliance with statutory requirements. Any queries or comments regarding this policy should be addressed to the HR Manager.

RELATED POLICIES

We also have the following related policies:

- Equality and Diversity policy
- Fertility Treatment Leave policy
- Flexible Working policy
- Health & Safety policy
- Parental leave policy
- Time off for dependants policy

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