



LNCT Agreement 12: Guidelines on Special Leave

(Revised July 2026)

Special Leave is additional time off work over and above normal accrued leave entitlements to enable staff to deal with specific matters. Teachers are unable to choose when they take their annual leave and there may be occasions when time off during term-time may be requested because of particular circumstances.

This guidance includes special leave categories set out in the SNCT Handbook of Conditions of Service and other circumstances when special leave may be granted. It does not cover Career Breaks, Sabbaticals, Family Leave such as Maternity, Paternity, Adoption or Parental Leave as these are dealt with under separate policies/procedures.

Certain categories of request for special leave can be authorised by a Headteacher while others require to be referred to the Chief Education Officer. A Headteacher should refer any personal request for special leave directly to the Head of Education.

Special Leave may be granted with or without pay depending on the circumstances. There is no automatic entitlement to leave without pay. Financial costs are not the only consideration – continuity of service is equally important and may lead to a request being refused.

Granting of special leave will be on a fair and consistent basis. There should be no less favourable treatment as a result of working arrangements (part time/full time, temporary/permanent), gender, ethnicity, religious beliefs, age or sexual orientation.

Other than in exceptional circumstances, all requests for special leave that require to be referred to the Chief Education Officer should be made no less than two weeks in advance of the period of requested leave. The Headteacher should forward the request to the Chief Education Officer, stating whether or not they support the request and if suitable arrangements can be made if the duties need to be covered.

Special Leave Circumstances

Time off for Dependants

Headteacher may grant up to 3 days paid leave in a leave year in connection with an emergency/unplanned serious illness or injury to a dependant* of a teacher. Where employees work part-time, there is a pro rata adjustment.

Additional Time off for Dependents will be granted where appropriate, but leave beyond 3 days will be unpaid.

** A dependant is a husband, wife or partner, child or parent, or someone living with the employee as part of the family.*

Bereavement

Stirling Council make provision for up to 10 working days paid bereavement leave.

This is based on an employee who works 5 days per week and where employees work for example 3 days per week, their maximum entitlement under this category would be 6 days (applied on a pro rata basis).

Amount of leave to reflect the particular circumstances of the case, approved by Headteacher/Head of Establishment. Leave intended to cover time required to make funeral arrangements and attend funeral as well as an element of compassionate leave.

Where an employee is finding it difficult to come to terms with bereavement this is more likely to be an ill health issue and managed under Sickness provisions.

Personal Health

Headteacher may grant such time off as is reasonable for the purpose of preventative medical examination, including emergency treatment, preventative cancer screening and hospital appointments. Time off granted will be with pay.

Routine appointments should be scheduled out with class committed time wherever possible. Separate conditions apply for ante natal treatment and can be found in the Family/ Maternity Policy.

Interviews

Headteacher may grant up to one day with pay to allow attendance at interview or up to two days when a visit to a school or an assessment centre is required.

Requests for more than two days should be referred to the Chief Education Officer.

Court Attendance and Jury Service

Teachers called as a witness (other than by the Council), entitled to special leave with pay. Teachers attending court as a witness for the Council are deemed to be on Council business and not taking leave.

Sporting and Cultural Activities

Headteacher may grant paid leave of absence of up to 5 days per year to teachers selected to represent their country at international level, including coaching.

Additional unpaid leave to be decided by Chief Education Officer.

Leave of absence without pay may be granted to enable a teacher to play in a national sporting championship. For requests of more than 2 days refer to Chief Education Officer.

Leave of absence with pay for participation in important international cultural or artistic events, refer request to Chief Education Officer.

Headteacher may grant up to 2 days with pay to attend National Mod as competitors or adjudicators.

Culturally Diverse Festivals

Headteacher may grant up to 2 days with pay in any one year for important religious festivals or holidays. Leave beyond this refer to Chief Education Officer, of which not more than 1 day shall be with pay.

Leave of absence may be granted for attendance at major meetings of religious bodies where teacher holds a particular office (eg General Assembly). Refer request to Chief Education Officer.

Leave associated with public appointments

Reasonable unpaid leave up to a maximum of 2 consecutive days at each request to attend relevant meetings in relation to being a local Councillor, Justice of the Peace or a member of a public body. On an exceptional basis, reasonable paid leave less any allowance made, up to a maximum of 2 consecutive days at each request to attend a Children's Panel. More extended leave to be referred to Chief Education Officer.

Up to 4 weeks without pay for teachers who are parliamentary candidates at the time of the general election. Refer request to Chief Education Officer.

House Move

Leave only granted in very exceptional circumstances during term time and may be paid. Refer request to Chief Education Officer.

Weddings / Civil Partnerships

Leave of absence for teacher's own marriage only granted in very exceptional circumstances e.g. where partner is in the armed forces and unable to take leave during school holidays. Any leave granted would be for limited time and without pay. Refer to Chief Education Officer

Headteacher can agree up to one day with pay to attend a family wedding. Additional days required for travelling would be unpaid.

Personal Business

Headteacher may approve short periods of less than a day with pay for reasonable requests for time off for personal business.

Expeditions

If granted, will be without pay except where the teacher agrees to undertake work which would prove beneficial in education terms. Leave granted will be for limited period.

Where teacher is accompanying groups of children other than their own pupils on a study trip as an award from an external body, leave will be granted with pay.

Refer requests to Chief Education Officer.

Conferences, Study Tours and Study Leave

Leave of absence with pay where selected to attend significant conferences of educational or religious nature in a representative capacity. With pay except where bursary or other payment is made. Refer to Chief Education Officer.

Leave of absence with pay where selected to undertake study tour of direct benefit to Schools, Learning and Education. With pay except where bursary or other payment is made. Refer to Chief Education Officer.

Time Off for Trade Union Duties

Refer to Stirling Council policy on Time off for Trade Union Duties.

Overseas Leave

All requests for special leave overseas, including amateur sporting events, study tours, conferences, expeditions etc – must be approved by Chief Executive.

Recording Special Leave

All Special Leave request will be made through the Council's HR/Payroll Management system and it will be clear from this submission where unpaid leave is applicable.

Appeals Process

The mechanism for appeal is Stirling Council's Grievance Procedure.

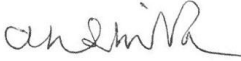
Note: Unpaid Leave of Absence and Superannuation

Superannuation contributions are not made during periods of unpaid leave of absence. Teachers are advised to check the impact of this on superannuation benefits. Further information can be obtained from the Scottish Public Pensions Agency website <http://www.sppa.gov.uk>.

Signed: 

Bryony Monaghan, Co-secretary LNCT

Date: 31 July 2026

Signed: 

Ann Skillen, Co-secretary LNCT

Date: 31 July 2026