



London Academy for Applied Technology
Absence and Leave Policy

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Policy Title	Absence and Leave Policy
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Oversight Committee	People and Culture Committee
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Scope	All employees of LAAT
Related Documents	Holidays Policy; Disciplinary Policy; Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy; Employee Handbook; Employment Contracts

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Regulatory Alignment

This policy is underpinned by the following key legislation. LAAT's approach to absence and leave management must comply with all applicable statutory requirements.

Legislation / Guidance	Relevance
Working Time Regulations 1998	Establishes statutory minimum annual leave entitlement and governs rest, working hours, and paid leave.
Employment Rights Act 1996	Governs statutory sick pay, right to time off for dependants, and the framework for fair absence management.
Equality Act 2010	Requires reasonable adjustments for disabled employees and prohibits unfair treatment related to protected characteristics, including disability-related absence.
Maternity and Parental Leave Regulations 1999 (as amended)	Governs maternity, paternity, adoption, and shared parental leave entitlements and notification requirements.
Parental Bereavement (Leave and Pay) Act 2018	Establishes statutory entitlement to parental bereavement leave and pay.
Carer's Leave Act 2023	Provides a statutory right to one week of unpaid carer's leave per year for employees with caring responsibilities.
UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018	Governs the processing of medical and absence-related personal data on a need-to-know basis.
ACAS Code of Practice	Sets expected standards for absence management, disciplinary procedures, and return-to-work practices.

Terms of Reference

1. Purpose

This policy sets out LAAT's approach to employee absences and leave. It explains entitlements, reporting and certification requirements, how absences will be managed, and the responsibilities of staff and managers. It aims to support staff wellbeing, ensure continuity of learning and services, and maintain fairness and legal compliance.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all employees of LAAT, including full-time, part-time, fixed-term, and temporary staff. It does not cover student attendance, which is governed separately.

3. Principles

- Compliance with UK employment law and statutory entitlements.
- Consistency, fairness, and confidentiality in managing absences.
- Early support and reasonable adjustments to help employees return to work.
- Proactive absence prevention and prompt management of short- and long-term absence.

4. Definitions

Term	Definition
Absence	Any period where an employee is not at work when scheduled to be.
Planned Leave	Pre-authorised absence such as annual leave or scheduled parental leave.
Unplanned Absence	Unforeseen absence such as sickness or emergency time off.
Short-Term Intermittent Absence	Repeated short absences over a period of time.
Long-Term Absence	Continuous absence lasting 4 weeks (20 working days) or more.
Fit Note	Medical certificate issued by a GP or other authorised clinician from day 8 of sickness absence.
SSP	Statutory Sick Pay — the minimum sick pay payable under UK law, subject to qualifying conditions.

5. Statutory Entitlements

LAAT will comply with all statutory leave entitlements, including:

- Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) and any agreed contractual sick pay provisions.
- Minimum annual leave under the Working Time Regulations (5.6 weeks per year).
- Maternity, paternity, adoption, and shared parental leave and pay.
- Parental Bereavement Leave and Pay.
- Time off for dependants, jury service, public duties, and other statutory entitlements.

Specific contractual or enhanced provisions are recorded in individual employment contracts or the Staff Handbook.

6. Types of Leave

6.1 Sickness Absence

- Employees must follow LAAT's sickness reporting procedure (see Section 7).
- Self-certification is acceptable for absences of up to 7 calendar days.
- A GP fit note is required from day 8 of consecutive absence.
- LAAT may request medical evidence where absence patterns give rise to concern.
- Employees who fall ill during annual leave may request re-crediting of affected days, subject to medical evidence and reporting procedures.

6.2 Annual Leave

Annual leave is governed by the Holidays Policy. The leave year runs 1 January to 31 December. Up to 5 days may be carried over and must be used by 1 April or they will be forfeited. Full carry-over rules, booking procedures, and blackout periods are set out in the Holidays Policy.

6.3 Family-Related Leave

Maternity, paternity, adoption, and shared parental leave will be administered in line with statutory requirements and any contractual enhancements. Managers must support employees with notifications, risk assessments, and return-to-work arrangements.

6.4 Parental Bereavement Leave

Employees who experience the death of a child are entitled to up to two weeks' parental bereavement leave in line with statutory provisions. Pay and support arrangements are detailed in the Staff Handbook.

6.5 Time Off for Dependants

Employees are entitled to reasonable unpaid time off to deal with emergencies involving dependants. Managers may grant paid leave at their discretion depending on circumstances and length of service.

6.6 Carer's Leave

Employees with caring responsibilities may take up to one week of unpaid Carer's Leave per 12-month period to provide or arrange care for a dependant with long-term care needs, in line with the Carer's Leave Act 2023.

6.7 Compassionate Leave

In cases of bereavement or serious personal circumstances, LAAT may grant paid or unpaid compassionate leave, subject to managerial discretion and as outlined in the Staff Handbook.

6.8 Jury Service and Public Duties

Leave for jury service, public duties, reservist service, and other statutory purposes will be managed in accordance with legislative requirements. Pay for such leave is at LAAT's discretion, subject to documentation.

6.9 Volunteering Leave

Employees may take up to 3.5 hours of paid volunteering leave up to four times per year, with prior approval and subject to operational needs.

6.10 Medical and Dental Appointments

- Routine appointments should be arranged outside working hours where possible.

- Where this is not feasible, reasonable time off may be granted and employees may need to make up the time.
- Disability-related appointments will not normally count as sickness absence.
- Cosmetic or non-medical treatments are not covered by paid sick leave and must be taken as annual or unpaid leave.

6.11 Religious and Cultural Observance

Employees may request annual leave, flexible working, or unpaid leave for religious or cultural observance. Managers will consider such requests sympathetically, subject to service requirements.

6.12 Major Incidents and Disruptive Events

Where travel or access is affected by severe weather or other emergencies, employees must make reasonable efforts to attend work without risking personal safety. Flexible or remote working may be considered. Where work cannot be performed, leave options include annual leave, unpaid leave, or TOIL depending on circumstances.

6.13 Abuse of Leave Arrangements

Misuse or abuse of leave provisions will be treated as misconduct and addressed under LAAT's Disciplinary Policy.

7. Reporting and Certification

7.1 Unplanned Absence

On the first day of any unplanned absence, the employee must:

- Contact their line manager (or nominated contact) by 9am, stating the reason and expected return date.
- If absence continues beyond the expected return, update the manager daily or as agreed.
- On return for absences of 7 days or fewer: complete a self-certification form.
- For absences of 8 or more consecutive calendar days: provide a GP fit note.

Managers must record all absences on the HR system within 3 working days.

7.2 Planned Absence

Requests for planned leave (medical appointments, fertility treatment, planned surgery) should be submitted in writing at least 2 weeks in advance and authorised by the line manager. Wherever possible, medical appointments should be scheduled outside core working hours.

8. Return-to-Work

A brief return-to-work discussion must take place at the end of every absence period to confirm wellbeing, collect any required documentation, update on work, and discuss reasonable adjustments where needed. For absences of 2 weeks or more, a formal welfare meeting should be held to discuss support, phased return, occupational health referral, and likely return date.

9. Managing Absence

9.1 Short-Term Intermittent Absence

Managers will monitor patterns and triggers (e.g. repeated Mondays, post-holiday absence, or similar symptoms) and consider informal coaching, occupational health referral, or a formal absence review meeting. Frequency-based triggers will be agreed with HR and applied consistently.

9.2 Long-Term Absence

For continuous absence of 4 weeks or more, HR and the line manager will arrange regular welfare contact, occupational health referral, and a phased return-to-work plan where appropriate. Reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act 2010 will be considered where disability is a factor. If a return is not reasonably foreseeable, the ill-health capability procedure will be followed, which may lead to redeployment, amended duties, or termination on fairgrounds after due process.

10. Occupational Health and Reasonable Adjustments

LAAT will use occupational health to obtain medical advice to support return to work and identify reasonable adjustments. Adjustments for disabled employees will be proportionate, evidence-based, and reviewed regularly.

Where an absence, sickness pattern, return-to-work concern or occupational health matter arises from, or is connected to, harassment, sexual misconduct, bullying, discrimination, victimisation, retaliation, safeguarding risk, abuse of power or staff-student boundary concerns, LAAT will provide appropriate wellbeing and absence support while also escalating the matter under the relevant specialist procedure. This may include the Sexual Harassment and Misconduct Policy, Safeguarding Policy, Grievance Policy, Disciplinary Policy or Personal Relationships Policy.

11. Pay During Leave and Absence

Leave Type	Pay Arrangement
Sickness Absence	Statutory Sick Pay is payable from the first qualifying day of sickness absence. The previous three waiting days and lower earnings limit no longer apply from 6 April 2026. LAAT will administer SSP in line with current statutory requirements and payroll guidance.
Maternity / Paternity / Adoption / Shared Parental	Statutory pay applies; contractual enhancements set out in individual contracts or Staff Handbook.
Parental Bereavement	Statutory pay applies; contractual enhancements as above.
Time Off for Dependents	Unpaid unless contractual terms specify otherwise.
Jury Service / Public Duties	At LAAT's discretion, subject to documentation.
Volunteering Leave	Paid (up to entitlement).
Medical / Dental Appointments	Reasonable paid time where outside working hours is not practicable.

Managers must seek HR advice before agreeing any pay arrangements that differ from contractual entitlements.

12. Confidentiality and Data Protection

Medical and absence information is confidential and processed in accordance with UK GDPR and LAAT's Data Protection and Privacy Policy. Access to sensitive health data is restricted to HR, occupational health, and relevant managers on a need-to-know basis.

13. Recording, Monitoring and Reporting

All absence reasons, duration, and trends are recorded on the HR system and reviewed monthly by HR and senior leadership. CIPD-recommended metrics (absence rate, average duration, short-term and long-term split) are used to monitor and reduce absence. Trends inform wellbeing interventions and are reported to the People and Culture Committee.

14. Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibilities
Employees	Attend work and maintain good attendance; follow reporting procedures; provide required evidence; cooperate with return-to-work plans.
Line Managers	Promote wellbeing; record and monitor absence; conduct return-to-work discussions; refer to HR or occupational health as appropriate; implement reasonable adjustments.
HR Manager	Provide advice and record keeping; train managers on absence management; review policy biennially; ensure statutory compliance.

15. Disciplinary and Capability Measures

Persistent unexplained or unauthorised absence may be treated as misconduct under the Disciplinary Policy. Ill-health capability is a separate process for employees unable to sustain their role due to health reasons. Dismissal on capability grounds will only be considered after fair process, medical advice, and exploration of reasonable adjustments.

16. Appeals

Employees may appeal formal absence-related decisions under LAAT's Appeal Procedure. Appeals must be submitted in writing within 5 working days of the decision.

17. Equality Impact

LAAT will consider equality impacts in applying this policy. Absence related to disability will not be unfairly penalised and will trigger proactive support and reasonable adjustments. All leave arrangements will be applied fairly and consistently in line with the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.

18. Related Documents

- Holidays Policy
- Disciplinary Policy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Data Protection and Privacy Policy
- Staff Handbook
- Employment Contracts

19. Review

This policy is reviewed biennially by HR or sooner following legislative changes, ACAS guidance updates, or significant operational requirements.

Appendices

Appendix A — Short-Term Absence Self-Certification Form

Field	
Name	
Department	
Dates of Absence	
Reason for Absence	
Declaration	I confirm the above is accurate.
Signature	
Date	

Appendix B — Return-to-Work Discussion Checklist

- Confirm reason for absence and employee wellbeing.
- Check and collect any required medical evidence (self-cert or fit note).
- Confirm any reasonable adjustments or phased return plan.
- Agree actions and follow-up date; record in HR system.

Appendix C — Manager Formal Meeting Letter (Template)

[Date]

Dear [Employee Name],

You are invited to a formal absence review meeting on [date/time] at [location] to discuss your absence record and support needs. You have the right to be accompanied by a trade union representative or a colleague.

Yours sincerely,

[Manager Name and Title]

Appendix D — Ill-Health Capability Checklist

- Occupational health referral date and summary (when available).
- Exploration of alternative roles or redeployment options.
- Consideration of reasonable adjustments and phased return.
- Timescales for review and agreed next steps.