

# Time Off for Public and Voluntary Service

### **Our Mission**

Raising Aspirations, Unlocking Potential, Advancing Futures

### **Our Values**

Excellence, Passion, Teamwork, Integrity, Innovation,  
Sustainability, Valuing Others and Supportiveness

### **Sparsholt College Group**

The Sparsholt College Group (the College Group) includes Sparsholt College, Andover College, University Centre Sparsholt, Sparsholt College Services, Westley Enterprises and Andover Town Football Club. College Group policies apply to each part of the group unless specified otherwise.

The Time Off for Public and Voluntary Service Policy was approved by the Board of Governors in April 2025 and supersedes any previous versions of the policy.

Originator:

Located:

College websites

College Group intranet

Due for review:

April 2028

## **TIME OFF FOR PUBLIC AND VOLUNTARY SERVICE POLICY**

### **Contents**

- 1. Policy Statement**
- 2. Background**
- 3. Time Off for:**
  - Voluntary Public Service**
  - Volunteer Reserve Forces**
  - Jury Service and Appearing as a Witness**

## TIME OFF FOR PUBLIC AND VOLUNTARY SERVICE POLICY

### 1. Policy Statement

- 1.1. The Sparsholt College Group (the College) recognises the importance of involvement in the community it serves and wishes to support our staff to play an active role in the wider community by allowing some time off from work to facilitate this within the context of maintaining a continually outstanding service to our learners and other customers.
- 1.2. The purpose of this policy is to set out the circumstances in which we will permit employees time off for the performance of public and voluntary services.
- 1.3. No one who requests time off under this policy will be subjected to any detriment or lose any career opportunities as a result.
- 1.4. This policy applies to employees only. It does not apply to agency workers, consultants, self-employed contractors and volunteers.
- 1.5. This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and it may be amended it at any time.

### 2. Background

- 2.1. If a member of staff is a magistrate, local councillor, school governor, or carries out one of the other public duties listed below, they are entitled to time off from work to carry out their role. Section 50 of the Employment Rights Act 1996 requires employers to permit employees who hold certain public positions reasonable time off to perform the duties associated with them. This will be in addition to the staff members' contractual leave entitlement.
- 2.2. Those who are covered by the provision include (non-exhaustive list):
  - justice of the peace;
  - member of a local authority;
  - member of a police authority;
  - member of any statutory tribunal;
  - member of a relevant health body;
  - member of the managing or governing body of an educational establishment;
  - member of the governing body of a further or higher education corporation;
  - member of the General Teaching Councils for England and Wales;
  - member of the Environment Agency;
  - member of a prison independent monitoring board.
- 2.3. The amount of time which a member of staff should be permitted to take off to perform these public duties is defined as that which is reasonable in all the circumstances, having particular regard to:
  - how much time off is required overall to perform the duties and how much time off is required to perform the particular duty in question;
  - how much time off the employee has already been permitted for this purpose or for trade union duties and/or activities; and

- the circumstances of the employer's business and the effect of the employee's absence upon it.
- 2.4. In addition, the College will also consider reasonable leave without pay, or flexibility of working hours, for any other voluntary activities.
  - 2.5. Any member of staff who has requested time off for public duties and believes that the request has been refused unreasonably should raise a grievance using the College's Grievance Procedure, which includes a right of appeal.
  - 2.6. As a Defence Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS) Bronze Award holder the College has pledged to demonstrate support to the armed forces community. This includes the availability of additional paid leave for Reservists and Cadet Force Adult Volunteers.

### **3. Time Off**

#### **Voluntary Public Service**

- 3.1. Voluntary public service involves individuals dedicating their time and skills to benefit the community without receiving financial compensation.
- 3.2. If a member of staff is unsure whether a public service that they perform is covered by this policy, they should speak to Human Resources in the first instance.
- 3.3. Staff should obtain the written agreement of the College, by having a discussion with their cost centre manager and relevant SLT colleague, prior to taking time off to undertake voluntary public service. The College will grant, subject to the exigencies of the service, special leave with pay, (less any relevant attendance allowance) for a period not exceeding 6 days paid leave and 6 days unpaid, in any period of 12 months for the purpose of carrying out these duties.
- 3.4. As soon as a member of staff is aware that they require time off for performance of a public service, they should notify their line manager in writing, providing full details of the time off that is being requested and the reasons for the request. In order that arrangements can be made to cover duties, such a request should be made in good time.
- 3.5. Any special leave authorised for public duties may be taken in days or half-days as required for each absence from work, with the prior agreement of the employee's cost centre manager and SLT colleague, depending on the employee's area of work. Such agreement will not unreasonably be withheld.
- 3.6. Each request for time off will be considered on its merits taking account of all the circumstances, including how much time is reasonably required for the activity, how much time the individual has already taken, and how any absence will affect the business.
- 3.7. A member of staff who is appointed chair, or equivalent, of a public body and thereby attracts additional duties may be granted up to 12 days' paid leave (with no additional unpaid leave) in any period of twelve months, for carrying out such additional duties, including any magisterial duties.
- 3.8. Staff who are granted paid special leave in accordance with the above should refund to the College any fees or attendance allowances received other than fees or allowances paid specifically as travelling and subsistence expenses. If the attendance allowance is greater than a day's pay, then unpaid leave will be given. No travelling or subsistence allowance will be paid by the College. Staff who are members of the Board of Governors

of this College will receive the relevant allowances payable under the Governors' Expenses Policy.

### **Volunteer Reserve Forces**

- 3.9. Volunteer Reserve Forces (VRF) in the UK are a part-time, voluntary military reserve force made up of individuals who train in their spare time to serve alongside regular forces supplementing them when operation demands require it.
- 3.10. The College will consider any request for leave where the reason for that leave is related to the member of staff's membership of the Volunteer Reserve Forces (VRF).
- 3.11. The College is aware that employees who are members of the Reserve Forces (the Army Reserve<sup>1</sup>, Royal Navy Reserve, Royal Marines Reserve or Royal Auxiliary Air Force) may be called-up at any time to be deployed on full-time operations, and are expected to attend regular training.
- 3.12. The College will award Reservists of the UK Armed Forces or Cadet Force Adult Volunteers two weeks of additional paid leave (pro rata for part time staff) if they are required to attend a camp for training purposes. This is in addition to any other leave that they might be eligible to take/apply for.
- 3.13. Subject to operational requirements (and its statutory duties), the College will seek to facilitate a UK Armed Forces Reservist's mobilisation and actively support the Reservist's return to work at the end of their deployment.
- 3.14. Members of the UK Reserve Forces and their managers are encouraged to use the annual Performance Reviews to explore how the employee's military experience can be effectively applied in their work.

### **Jury Service and Appearing as a Witness**

- 3.15. Staff should inform their line manager as soon as they are summoned for jury service or summoned to attend court as a witness and must provide a copy of their summons notification .
- 3.16. Depending on the demands of the College's business, the member of staff may be requested to apply to be excused from or defer jury service.
- 3.17. Staff who are called for jury service will be granted time off to undertake jury service. Payment to staff while you are absent on jury service is made at the College's discretion (and not on a contractual basis) Staff will continue to be paid their normal basic pay during the period less any amounts they can claim from the court. Staff are required to claim loss of earnings from the Court by submitting a completed certificate of loss of earnings form and to remit the amount received from the Court to the College.

---

<sup>1</sup> Formerly the **Territorial Army**