Employee Handbook

If you require this document in an alternative format please contact office@Trust.staffs.sch.uk or 01543 472245

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Publication:		Website. G/Policies		
Owner		J Bowman		
Date	**Version**	**Reason for change**	**Overview of changes**	**Source**
21.05.20	1.0	Scheduled Review	Minor updates	Existing Trust policy
20.05.21	1.1	Internal Lead Scheduled Review	Update to personnel, name & logo.	
09.07.21	2.0	Scheduled Board review	Ratified	
17.11.21	2.1	Changes to policies	Inclusion of previous Confidentiality, flexible working, harassment and bullying, managing probation, maternity and paternity, performance management, social media, staff behaviour, and staff induction and development policies. J Bowman	Previous Trust policies
25.03.22	2.2	Board Lead Review	Amendment to Childcare Voucher information. C Humphries.	
17.06.22	3.0	Board Review	Ratified	
28.03.23	3.1	Internal Lead Scheduled Review	Update of staff names and new LGC structure.	
25.04.23	3.2	Board Lead Review	No changes. C Humphries	
05.05.23	4.0	Board Review	Ratified	
31.01.24	4.1	Changes to legislation	Updated legislation around paternity leave. JB	

03.02.24	4.2	Changes to legislation	Updated legislation around carer's leave, paternity leave and flexible working. Updated information on representative sport. Included information on Long Service Award. J Bowman	
02.04.24	4.3	Board Lead Review	No changes. C Humphries	
19.04.24	5.0	Board Review	Ratified	
01.10.24	5.1	Change to practice	Addition of Trust's right to access an individual's accounts for Trust systems in the event of sickness where this would interrupt the smooth running of the business (i.e. for those with financial or administrative responsibilities). JB	
19.11.24	5.2	Change in response to legislation	Updated Harassment and Bullying section to include more information on sexual harassment. JB	The Key.
22.11.24	6.0	FAR Review	Ratified by FAR	
08.04.25	6.1	Change to legislation	Inclusion of new Neonatal Leave provisions. J Bowman	PHRP
16.05.25	7.0	Board Review	Ratified	
30.09.25	7.1	Change in response to legislation & practice	Updated information regarding the AI Policy. Further information on Cyber Security. Addition of paragraph regarding mispayments due to inaccurate information given to the Trust. Update of Anti-Harassment and Bullying Policy from SCC Jan 23 Clarification on expense claims.	SCC Jan 23
03.10.25	8	Board Review	Ratified	
11.11.25	8.1	Clarification of practice	Addition of clarification around communication outside of working hours. J Bowman.	
09.02.26	8.2	Clarification of teacher resignation dates	Addition of teacher/headteacher resignation dates. J Bowman	
17.03.26	8.3	Change in response to legislation	Update to paternity leave & unpaid parental leave day 1 right & inclusion of bereaved partner paternity leave following Employment Act 25. J Bowman.	

08.05.26	9	Board review	Ratified	
14.09.26	10	Change in process	Update to Training section to include consequences of staff not completing courses paid for by the Trust	
09.10.26	10	Board ratification	Ratified	

Introduction

Welcome to The Staffordshire Schools Multi Academy Trust. We hope that you enjoy being part of the team and that you can easily access information about your role and the development opportunities which are available to you. This Handbook aims to provide general information in relation to your employment; you should refer to your written statement of employment particulars for the detail of your own terms and conditions of employment.

Our employees work hard together to deliver the best possible outcomes for all our pupils. Where possible, we seek to remove any barriers or obstacles to the achievement of anything other than 'professional excellence' and our internal policies and processes are designed to support this.

From time to time this Handbook will be updated in line with changing practice and new legislation. Changes will be communicated to all and you will be consulted on any proposed changes to your contract.

It is important that you keep us informed of any changes in your personal circumstances including contact details and any relevant changes to your health or circumstances. Please ensure you let us know when changes occur.

If you have any queries at any time, please discuss them with the Trust Business Operations Manager.

We look forward to working with you.

Charlene Gethin
CEO

STAFFORDSHIRE SCHOOLS
MULTI ACADEMY TRUST

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The Organisational Structure

The Governance of the Trust is made up of three layers:

- The Board of Members;
- The Board of Directors;
- Local Advisory Groups or Local Governing Committees.

<u>The Board of Members</u>

The function of the Board of Members is:

- To appoint the Board of Directors following advice, nomination and the fulfilment of any articles of government that might apply;
- To manage the dismissal of a director or the Board of Directors, if circumstances are deemed to require it; supported by reasoning and if necessary legal advice;
- To initiate and confirm the appointment of the Chief Executive Officer when necessary;
- To hold the Board of Directors to account on the following matters:
    - Standards, over time, in the schools that make up the trust;
    - Financial probity and confirming CEO salary;
    - The effective and efficient discharge of the remaining functions and duties of the Board of Directors.

The Members

Heather Bowman - Chair of the Members Board
CECET Representative
Reverend Simon Davies – St. Mary's Clergy Representative
David Grewer
Charles Bradshaw-Smith

Contact via Jacqui Bowman – j.bowman@tssmat.staffs.sch.uk or 01543 472245

<u>The Board of Directors</u>

The function of the Board of Directors is:

- To have accountability for, and oversight of, the leadership and management of the schools in the Trust by setting the vision and values of the Trust that will drive the ethos of the schools;
- To act as an Audit Committee to ensure propriety and value for money;
- Creating Trust policy and process;
- Setting the expectations that will be used to judge the effectiveness of each institution in the Trust;
- Providing the resources for each institution to deliver what is required, including CPD;
- Appointing and dismissing teaching and support staff;
- To act as a Pupil/Staff Discipline Committee;
- Monitoring the quality of local leadership;
- Performance management functions including recommending CEO remuneration to Members;
- Ensuring that thorough, rigorous and regular self-evaluation is undertaken and reported to the Board by each institution;
- Ensuring that the leadership of each institution is held to account by the Board;
- Ensuring that standards, progress and attainment meet expectations, can be accounted for, measured and reported;
- Challenging aspects that appear to be inconsistent, weak or failing in any or all of the institutions;

- Approving admissions to the schools and managing the appeals process;
- To monitor Finance, Personnel, Health & Safety, Safeguarding and Curriculum matters and ensure that they are fit for purpose and meet all regulations.

The Directors

Peter Halifax, Co- Chair and Director of Strategy & Development – non-executive, non-salaried, oversight of the Trust's development and strategies to achieve its growth, sustainability and capacity to improve;

Melanie Havelock-Crozier, Co- Chair and Director of Pupil Care – non-executive, non-salaried, oversight of all matters in the Trust relating to safeguarding, SEND, SIAMS, LAC, Pupil Premium, well-being, behaviour and inclusiveness of all pupils (their spiritual, social, moral and cultural development);

Caroline Humphries, Director of Corporate Affairs - **Human Resources**: non-executive, non-salaried, oversight of personnel processes including CPD, legalities, salaries, processes in order to ensure viability, sustainability and development of the Trust;

Angela Burns, Director of Corporate Affairs - Estates, Learning Environment and Health and Safety – non-executive, non-salaried, oversight of the Trust's estates and their safety and the quality of the learning environments. This role also includes any trading arm that involves Health and Safety issues and legalities;

Rebecca Breedon, Director of Performance and Quality – non-executive, non-salaried, oversight of the Trust standards in pupil performance and the quality of teaching in order to maintain institutions being judged as at least good if not outstanding and to focus on self- evaluation;

Sophie Skelton, – non-executive, non-salaried.

Charlene Gethin – CEO and Accounting Officer

Contact via Jacqui Bowman – j.bowman@tssmat.staffs.sch.uk or 01543 472245

The Members' and Directors' Boards are supported by:
Nicola Saint – Clerk to Directors / Members n.saint@tssmat.staffs.sch.uk or 01543 472245
Jacqui Bowman – Business Operations Manager j.bowman@tssmat.staffs.sch.uk or 01543 472245
Shanie Cole – Finance Manager finance@tssmat.staffs.sch.uk or 01543 472245

Local Governing Committees (LGC's)
Our Local Governing Committees (LGC's) offer strategic guidance rather than getting involved in the operational aspects of a school. They:

- Hold senior leaders to account, ensuring that they provide the best education for the children, and ensuring that the curriculum, quality of teaching and the outcomes are the best that they can be.
- Provide assurances to the Trust that the above is as expected.

- Provide advice to the Trust Board about the strategic direction of the school and how to make best use of the resources the school has available to them.

The relationship with the school's leadership team involves challenging existing processes to drive school improvement.

The Local Governing Committee Members *(excluding staff members)*

All Saints
Andy Summers - Chair
Ruth Lawton
Margaret Simanwe
Matthew Sutton

Anson
There is a separate Scheme of Delegation for Anson.
Members:
Anna Freeman - Chair
Andy Broome
Andrew Cooper
Emily Faragher
Anton Illsley
Emily Taylor

Mary Howard & St Andrews
Anna Spencer-Grey - Chair
John Grice
Elaine Harlin
Kevin Higginson
Russell Kilgallon
Stephen Webb

St Mary's
Ben Sykes - Chair
Lynne Dean
Lucy Hastings
Tim Parr
Anna Redpath
Kate Staples

The Howard
Helen Robertson - Chair
Chris Billingham
Lesley Bovington

James Branagh
Polly Embury
Carolyn Gavin
Daniel Quinn
Jackie Tyler

The Richard Crosse
Darren Walsh - Chair
Jodie Jenkinson
Laura Kirven
Ann Shilton

The Trust's Objects and Aims
The Trust's object ("the object") is specifically restricted to the following:

To advance for the public benefit education in the United Kingdom, in particular but without prejudice to, the generality of the foregoing by establishing, maintaining, carrying on, managing and developing schools which shall offer a broad and balanced curriculum and which shall include:

1) Church of England Schools designated as such which shall be conducted in accordance with the principles, practices and tenets of the Church of England both generally and in particular in relation to arranging for religious education and daily acts of worship, and having regard to any advice issued by the Lichfield Diocesan Board of Education;

2) Other schools not designated as Church of England Schools whether with or without a designated religious character;

3) To recognise and support the individual ethos of all schools whether or not designated Church of England schools.

Vision

Our vision is threefold:-

- To deliver the highest quality learning for pupils in an environment that values the friendliness and familiarity that small numbers allow;
- To extend learning beyond the confines of the school into the community and beyond;
- To ensure that a local community has a future, and can thrive, if quality education is at its heart.

Values

Our values are threefold:-

- That every child is a child of God irrespective of gender, ethnicity, religion, ability or family background and as such is unique and to be nurtured and be brought to full potential;
- That the ethos which underpins our attitudes and behaviours is that we will love our neighbours as ourselves;
- That learning and being taught well in a caring community makes us better and stronger people.

Ethos

The ethos of the Trust is that we operate with honesty and integrity for the benefit of all children attending any of our schools. We recognise the important role small schools play in the education system in improving outcomes for children which is achieved by creating a caring and nurturing family ethos. As a group of schools this enables us to be large enough to cope and small enough to care.

Christian Ethos

The Trust is made up of six Church of England Primary Schools and a Community School. All pupils and staff are welcome within our schools irrespective of their religion. We ask that you, regardless of faith, uphold the values of our schools.

The schools within the Trust are:

All Saints CE Primary School & Nursery
Bourne Avenue
Ranton
Stafford
ST18 9JU
Charlotte Ashton - Headteacher / Designated Safeguarding Lead
Contact: 01785 282 228
Email: c.ashton@tssmat.staffs.sch.uk

Anson Church of England Primary School
Main Road
Stafford
ST18 0SU
Nicola Jarrett – Headteacher / Designated Safeguarding Lead
Contact: 01889 881 200
Email: n.jarrett@Trust.staffs.sch.uk

Mary Howard CE Primary School
School Lane
Edingale
Tamworth
B79 9JJ
Rachel Mills - Executive Headteacher / Designated Safeguarding Lead
Contact: 01827 383 245
Email: r.mills@tssmat.staffs.sch.uk

St Andrew's CE Primary School
Main St
Clifton Campville
Tamworth
B79 0AP
Rachel Mills - Executive Headteacher / Designated Safeguarding Lead
Contact: 01827 383 266
Email: r.mills@tssmat.staffs.sch.uk

St Mary's Church of England Primary School
Bellamour Way
Colton
Rugeley
WS15 3LN
Jon Wynn - Executive Headteacher / Designated Safeguarding Lead
Contact: 01889 224506
Email : j.wynn@Trust.staffs.sch.uk

The Howard Primary School
The Square
Elford
Tamworth
B79 9DB
Jon Wynn – Executive Headteacher / Designated Safeguarding Lead
Contact: 01827 383292
Email : j.wynn@Trust.staffs.sch.uk

The Richard Crosse Church of England Primary School
Crawley Lane
Kings Bromley
Burton- on-Trent
DE13 7JE
Emma Bowring – Headteacher / Designated Safeguarding Lead
Contact: 01543 472245
Email : e.bowring@Trust.staffs.sch.uk

Guiding Principles

The following guiding principles will apply to all HR and other processes outlined in this Handbook:

Confidentiality - All HR processes will be treated with confidentiality. However, the desire for confidentiality does not override the need for the Trust to quality-assure the operation and effectiveness of systems.

Equitable and Fair – We are committed to equality and diversity and will make reasonable adjustments to the application of procedure in line with our equal opportunities commitment.

Consistent and Objective – All managers have a duty to ensure that they and all of the colleagues they are responsible for are aware of, and comply with, the Trust's policies and procedures.

Conditions of Service

Employees are required to be on duty during academic term time and may be employed on a full or part time basis. Employees may be engaged on term time only or whole year contracts, on either a permanent, fixed term or temporary basis.

Each school's normal opening times are from 8:30 – 15:30, Monday to Friday (excluding Care Club). Your individual contract may have fixed hours or be subject to the direction of your line manager - see your Written Statement of Employment Particulars for the details. Where appropriate any additional hours worked will be paid at the normal rate of pay and are subject to approval by your line manager in advance.

Your Personal Information

You should ensure that we have up to date information about you, including change of address or telephone number; next of kin to contact in an emergency; bank or building society details; gain or loss of relevant qualifications or licences, such as loss of driving licence and loss of right to work in the UK. It is the responsibility of every employee to ensure that all personal and financial details provided to the Trust, particularly bank account information for payroll, are complete and accurate at all times. In the event of a mispayment resulting from inaccurate or outdated information supplied by the employee, the Trust is not held accountable for the error. The Trust will make reasonable efforts to help recover any funds sent to an incorrect account. If the mispaid funds can be successfully recovered, they will be reissued to the employee. However, if the funds cannot be recovered after reasonable attempts, the Trust will not issue a duplicate payment or refund the lost amount. Any delay or loss of funds resulting from an employee's failure to update their details is the sole responsibility of that employee.

You must inform us if you are subject to legal proceedings during your employment with us. It is also important that you inform us of any changes in your health or wellbeing to enable us to assess and minimise any impact that work may have, and to support you in your role. Please see our Privacy Notice for more information on how we process your data.

Disclosure & Barring Check

All employees will be subject to the relevant Disclosure and Barring Check as part of pre-employment checking. You will have been asked to declare any pre-existing or current offences or convictions you hold during the application process. You have a responsibility to declare any investigations, offences or convictions that occur during your employment to your line manager as soon as possible.

Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006
All new staff are required to complete a disqualification form as part of their pre-employment checks. If you become disqualified under the Regulations during your employment you must inform your line manager immediately. The Trust will inform Ofsted and explain the implication of disqualification. You will need to make an application to Ofsted who will grant a full or partial waiver.

Dress and appearance
You are expected to take a safe and sensible approach to dress and appearance, cleanliness and personal hygiene. You must present a positive image of the school and should act as a role model for pupils.

The following should not be worn at work:

- cropped tops, halter neck, low cut tops, vest tops or any clothing with unnecessary flesh visible, visible underwear or very short skirts/shorts;
- any clothing with slogans or brand names that may cause offence;
- excessive or large jewellery, in particular items which cause distraction;
- clothing that has fashion holes and rips;
- tattoos should be covered where possible;
- footwear needs to be appropriate and suitable for the activity being undertaken, open toed shoes should not be worn;
- sportswear is only to be worn on days where sports will be undertaken, including trainers;
- finger nails are to be kept clean and not excessively long.

Please note staff must ensure that where provided, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is worn as required.

Staff and management are encouraged to take a sensible approach to the suitability of 'work wear' in relation to the activity being undertaken.

Personal Property
You are responsible for your own personal property and the Trust does not accept any liability or responsibility for damage to, or loss of, individual employees' property. The Trust provides lockers in school staff rooms for staff to store their belongings securely.

Conflicts of interest
You should not allow your private interests to conflict with, or appear to be in conflict with, the interests of Trust. All staff are asked to make a declaration of pecuniary interests on an annual basis.

Induction Programme

All new employees will be provided with an induction to help them settle in and become effective as quickly as possible. This will include a specific Health and Safety, Data Protection, and Safeguarding Induction Programme. In addition, a structured programme of work will be agreed to support you during the probationary period and beyond, this will identify access to suitable training and development opportunities as well as capitalise on the strengths and experience of new employees.

Each new member of staff at The Staffordshire Schools Multi Academy Trust receives access to all of the Trust's policies and procedures. Within the first month of your employment, your line manager will discuss the practical implications of the Trust's policies and procedures with you. You will sign the **Induction Forms** to confirm that you have received your induction, and read and understood the Trust's policies.

All new staff will receive induction training which will include:

- Introduction to their colleagues, pupils and parents or carers;
- Tour of the premises including: identification of all fire exits, location of first aid kit and fire safety equipment and information about the emergency evacuation procedures; outside play areas, fire assembly points, collection points at the school and identification of any known hazards;
- Thorough briefing about the Trust's safeguarding and child protection policy and procedures and about our Equal Opportunities policy and ethos;
- Thorough briefing about the Trust's data protection, and health and safety policies and procedures;
- Location of relevant Trust resources, records and documentation, storage, toilets etc.;
- Overview of all aspects of the day-to-day management and running of the relevant area of work
- Explanation of the Trust's obligation to comply with the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS);
- Explanation of the processes for appraisals, training and development, booking holidays, sickness absence, staffing rota, etc.

Development and training

We are committed to the continuous professional development of all employees. To ensure that your development needs are being met, and that staff training and qualifications are meeting all statutory requirements, the requirements of the Trust and the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, we provide all our staff with:

- a thorough induction process;
- a system of regular appraisals and reviews;
- opportunities for training and professional development.

Programmes of support and development are implemented to match individual needs and to enhance performance in the role. You are encouraged to access new experiences in a structured way and share your skills and experience with others. Professional qualifications and training routes are encouraged and supported as part of an individual development plan subject to funding.

Your line manager will identify and promote suitable training courses for you so that they can expand your professional development and keep your relevant knowledge up to date. You are expected to attend training courses as and when requested by your line manager. We keep an up to date record of staff qualifications and maintain a training development plan.

The Trust operates a Professional Qualification Training Scheme which requires that employees who receive access to qualifications funded by the Trust are required to repay all or part of the costs if they leave

employment for a reason other than redundancy, during the training or within 12 months after the training has ended. The Trust requires employees to enter into an agreement to repay the training costs on a sliding scale in this circumstance. This means that, if an employee is responsible for not completing the training or if they leave employment during the training, or within 12 months of the date of completion of the training or qualification, the employee will be required to repay the full cost of the training.

Following this period the amount that will be required to be repaid is reduced by 1/12th at monthly intervals. Following 24 months service from the date of the end of the training employees will not be required to repay any of the costs of the training on leaving employment.

The organisation reserves the right to require you to repay any relevant training costs out of your final salary payment. Depending on the circumstances, the organisation may agree to repayment via a series of repayments after your employment ends if the amount is too great to be repaid out of your final salary payment.

Pre-Course Work and e-Learning

Where a booked training course requires mandatory pre-course preparation or online modules prior to attending a face-to-face session (e.g., Paediatric First Aid e-learning), employees are required to complete this work by the specified deadline.

- The Trust will allocate reasonable time during normal working hours for employees to complete mandatory pre-course modules. If business needs prevent completion during working hours, employees must notify their line manager in advance to arrange allocated time or Time Off in Lieu (TOIL).
- If an employee fails to complete required pre-course work without a valid reason (e.g., approved sickness absence or emergency leave):
    1. The employee will not be permitted to attend the face-to-face element and will be withdrawn from the session.
    2. Where non-completion results in a wasted course place or cancellation fee, or necessitates re-booking at additional cost, the Trust reserves the right to require the employee to reimburse the costs incurred, in accordance with the Deductions from Salary policy.
    3. Unreasonable failure to complete mandatory pre-course work constitutes a failure to follow a reasonable management instruction and may be addressed under the Disciplinary Policy.
    4. If the training is a legal or statutory requirement for the role (e.g., EYFS staffing ratios), the employee may be temporarily reassigned or restricted from performing specific duties until the qualification is completed.

Appraisals and reviews

Your line manager will hold an annual appraisal meeting with you. The appraisal will reflect on progress and challenges over the previous year and identify current knowledge and skills, areas for future development and potential training needs.

Your line manager will hold quarterly reviews with you to monitor your professional development and your progress with regards to the targets set, and issues raised, during annual appraisals.

Staff meetings

Staff meetings provide a forum in which staff can share information, solve problems and raise work issues. Staff meetings are held weekly. If you are part time, the pattern of staff meeting attendance will be discussed with you. For teachers, this constitutes part of your directed time.

Probation

All newly appointed support staff are subject to a probationary period of three months, or the statutory probationary period set by their profession, whichever is greater. This serves to ensure that new employees are supported to perform to the standard expected of them and ultimately, to ensure that they have the required knowledge, skills and ability to carry out their appointed role.

The Probation Period

All new staff will be fully supported to integrate into the Trust, their team, their working environment and their new role.

The probation period for support staff lasts for a minimum of 3 months from the date of appointment but may be extended in exceptional circumstances. Extensions would not typically extend beyond a further 3 months (i.e. making a probation period of 6 months in total).

The probation period typically consists of the following structured meetings with informal discussion taking place around these as required:

- Induction & Initial Probation Review Meeting (first week);
- First Review Meeting (end of month 1);
- Second Review Meeting (end of month 2);
- Final Review Meeting (month 3 – in advance of probation end date).

The aims of the probation period are to:

- Maximise the support provided to new employees in order to assist the effective performance of their duties at work, and to ensure that they have the required knowledge, skills and ability for the role to which they have been appointed ;
- Contribute to a culture of excellence within the Trust;
- Encourage communication and dialogue around performance during the early stages of employment with the Trust;
- Ensure the Trust acts in a fair, reasonable and consistent manner when dealing with performance management issues during the probation period.

Throughout the probation period your performance and development will be regularly discussed. This includes holding Review Meetings as outlined above in addition to routine line management.

Where conduct or attendance issues arise during probation these will be managed in line with the principles of the Trust's Managing Attendance Policy or Disciplinary Procedure as appropriate. Due to the short nature of the probation period such cases may progress immediately to the final stages of these policies.

Where an underlying medical condition or disability is affecting performance at work advice will be sought from the Trust's HR Advisors.

Where it is established at an early stage that an employee is unsuitable for the role (and where there is documented evidence that the need for improvement has been discussed previously) it may be appropriate for the manager to consider ending the probation process early (i.e. dismissing the employee), without having to wait until the 6 month point. HR advice will always be sought in these circumstances.

Where a probationary employee takes maternity, adoption or shared parental leave, their probation period will be extended accordingly on their return from leave. HR advice will be sought in such cases to ensure all appropriate steps are taken to support the employee during their probation period.

Routine Management during Probation

Day to day discussions are a quick, effective and informal tool for your manager to gauge your performance whilst offering the opportunity for you to raise any concerns or request any support you might need. Day-to-day discussions will therefore take place as often as required to ensure that an appropriate level of support is available outside of the more structured interim and final Review Meetings.

Induction Probation Meeting

The probation process should work alongside your induction at both a local level and at a Trust-wide level to support you in feeling welcome in your new environment, and allow you to learn the key elements of your job within a reasonable and realistic timescale.

An Induction Meeting will take place within the first week to discuss the requirements of your role and the expectations during the probation period and beyond. Your line manager should ensure that you are fully aware of the expectations of you in your new role through the induction process by outlining clear and measurable objectives or performance standards, particularly accounting for the requirements of your job description.

The form Probation Review will typically be used as part of this meeting to note the agreed objectives/performance standards, as well as identifying any training needs, support or adjustments required before being signed by both you and your line manager to acknowledge agreement. These will be reflected upon throughout any subsequent probation discussions or meetings.

First Review Meeting

A first review meeting will be scheduled, typically around the 1 - 2 month point to allow for a structured 'check-in' discussion. This ensures that you are settling into your new role and provides the opportunity for any concerns or problems to be raised and for early feedback to be provided on performance so far.

The same form Probation Review, used at the Induction Probation Meeting will be used by your manager to guide and record the discussion at this meeting. The form will be retained for reference and updating at the Second Review Meeting.

Where it is identified at an early stage that improvement is required, your line manager will discuss with you the areas which are causing concern before clearly outlining the expected level of performance.

Any relevant objectives or timescales for improvement will be clearly outlined and any supportive measures or adjustments will be recorded, implemented and reviewed. In such circumstances it may be appropriate to hold more structured Review Meetings on a more frequent basis. Depending on the level of underperformance, it may be appropriate at this early stage for managers to outline the risks of employment not being confirmed after probation should performance not improve.

Following the first Review Meeting, managers will continue to use supportive routine discussions as appropriate in order to support a high-level of performance or to support improvement in performance (where relevant).

Second Probation Review Meeting
A Second Review Meeting will be scheduled, typically around the 3 - 4 month point in order to review your performance to date, specifically in relation to any objectives set. It is also a further opportunity to discuss any concerns or problems which may have arisen and to reflect on any training, development or support requirements, including reviewing the effectiveness of any supports which have already been put in place. Arrangements will also be made to undertake any outstanding identified training and review training needs.

The same form Probation Review, used at the initial and first probation meetings will continue to be used by managers to guide and record the discussion at this meeting. The form will be retained for reference and updated at the final review meeting.

In any areas where improvement is required, the expected level of performance will be clearly outlined and any supportive measures or adjustments will be recorded, implemented and reviewed. Where improvement is required, it may be appropriate to hold more structured Review Meetings on a regular basis. It is also important in such cases that you are made aware that a determination will be made at the final Review Meeting (outlined below) as to whether or not probationary performance has been satisfactory. In such cases where it is deemed that performance has not improved to a satisfactory level, then dismissal is a potential outcome of the final Review Meeting. In cases where it is apparent that dismissal may be a potential outcome, HR support will be sought at this early stage.

Following the second Review Meeting, managers will continue to use routine discussions to support a high-level of performance or to support improvement in performance if appropriate.

Final Review Meeting (month 3)
The final review meeting will be held in advance of the probation end date.
Whether or not performance has been satisfactory over the probationary period will determine how the meeting will be held, as per below:

Satisfactory Probation Performance
Where satisfactory performance is demonstrated throughout the probation period, managers will hold a Final Review Meeting in the normal way and record the outcome on the Final Probation Review form. The form will then be returned to the Trust Business Manager who will confirm successful probation in writing.

You will then be managed as normal with any agreed support maintained and reviewed on an ongoing basis as needed.

Unsatisfactory Probation Performance
In cases where satisfactory performance has not been demonstrated despite a period of review and support, you will be invited to a more structured Final Review Meeting and be made aware that dismissal is a possible outcome of the meeting. HR advice will be sought in such circumstances and an HR Adviser will be present at the meeting. The Final Review Meeting in these circumstances will typically be conducted by the direct line manager involved throughout the probation period.

In such cases, your manager will consider the following at the Final Review Meeting:
- The issues or problems which have been identified and discussed throughout the probation period;
- The level of consultation which has taken place with you across your probation period;
- The level of support offered to support an improvement;
- The period of time over which performance has been assessed;

- Any mitigating factors or advice provided by Occupational Health;
- Representations made by you or your representative.

Following consideration of the above a decision will be made regarding the outcome of your probation period. This decision may be dismissal from employment with the Trust, with one month's notice (plus payment for any accrued but untaken annual leave).

Where a decision is taken to dismiss, full reasons for the decision will be communicated by your manager and confirmed in writing.

HR advice will be sought in cases where there may be visa implications as a result of any decision to dismiss.

In exceptional circumstances, cases may progress to this stage at an earlier point where it can be evidenced that an employee is clearly unsuitable for the role despite a reasonable level of support and guidance having been provided.

In some cases an extension to the probation period may be considered as an alternative to dismissal. Where the probation period is extended regular further Review Meetings will be held as necessary, however extensions will not normally take the probation period beyond 9 months in total. The process outlined for the previous Review Meetings will be repeated as the 9-month point approaches.

Probation Decision Appeals

If an employee wishes to appeal the outcome of a decision taken at the final probation meeting, they should submit an appeal in writing outlining their full grounds for appeal, to the CEO, within 5 working days of receipt of the Trust's decision. Employees will be notified that their appeal has been received.

The appeal stage is not intended to be a rehearing of the original case. Hence the grounds for appeal should typically fall within one of the following:

- Procedural error;
- The outcome and recommendations are unreasonable and significantly out of line with the issues considered;
- New information is now available which could not have reasonably been provided when the original outcome was communicated.

The Trust will invite the employee in writing to attend an appeal hearing, normally within 10 working days of receipt of an appeal. The letter will advise the employee of their right to be accompanied by a work colleague or Trade Union Representative.

Appeals will be heard by a panel of Board members. Dismissal appeals will be heard by a panel of two.

The employee will normally be informed of the outcome in writing within 5 working days of the appeal meeting.

Where an appeal is upheld and an appellant is reappointed, it may be appropriate for them to return to their role subject to an ongoing probation period appropriate to the circumstances.

This exhausts the appeal procedure and there is no further right of appeal.

Annual Leave Entitlements

The leave year runs from 1 September to 31 August. Annual leave for all staff must be taken within the school closure periods within the year in which it is accrued and it may not be carried over. All leave outside of school closure periods is subject to operational requirements and the need to maintain reasonable staffing levels.

In accordance with School Teachers Pay and Conditions, annual leave for teachers coincides with periods of school closure and public holidays.

Full time employees are entitled to a minimum of 24 days paid leave per year plus normal bank holidays; this is prorated for part time employees. Bank Holidays must be taken on the day on which they fall as published nationally.

FTE Annual Leave Entitlements

Salary	0 - 4 yrs	5 - 14 yrs	15 – 24 yrs
Up to SCP 28	24	29	30
SCP 29 – 40	26	30	31
SCP 41 & over	27	31	32
Chief Officer	29	32	33

Annual leave entitlements are worked out as follows:

Part Time Whole Year Workers

A part time worker is entitled to the same number of proportionate days annual leave as a full time equivalent worker.

Before calculating the entitlement to annual leave the complete leave entitlement should be calculated which includes:

- Annual leave entitlement;
- 8 Bank holidays;
- 2 extra statutory days.

Calculation method:

No. days worked per week x number of weeks paid leave.

Calculation example:

SCP 27 employee works 21 hours per week over 3 days and has 3 year's service.

Their FTE leave entitlement is 24 annual leave days, 8 bank holidays and 2 extra statutory days pro rata.

24 + 8 + 2 / 5 = 6.8 paid leave weeks
3 x 6.8 = 20.4 days annual leave entitlement

To convert the days to hours:
Number of hours worked per week x annual leave entitlement in weeks = number of hours annual leave per year.

21 x 6.8 = 142.8 hours

Part Time Workers (starting or finishing part way through the year)
Where part time workers only work for part of an annual leave year, a proportionate amount of annual leave should be calculated as follows:

New starters: pro rata annual leave entitlement from the calculation above / 12 x full months remaining in leave year = annual leave entitlement for current leave year.

Leavers: pro rata annual leave entitlement from the calculation above / 12 x completed months worked in year - annual leave already taken = balance of annual leave entitlement to take or be paid.

Term Time Workers
A term time worker is entitled to the same number of proportionate days annual leave as a full time equivalent worker. As with part time workers, before calculating the entitlement to annual leave, the complete leave entitlement should be calculated which includes:

- Annual leave entitlement;
- 8 Bank holidays;
- 2 Extra statutory days.

Calculation method for annual leave entitlement:
Number of pay weeks - number of working weeks = annual leave weeks.
Annual leave weeks x number of contracted days per week = annual leave entitlement.

Calculation example:
Employee works 5 days a week for 39.2 weeks a year and has less than 5 year's service.
Their complete leave entitlement is 24 annual leave days, 8 bank holidays and 2 extra statutory days pro rata:
45.08 [pay weeks] - 39.20 [working weeks] x 5 [number of contracted days per week] = 29.4 rounded to 29.5 days.

Annual leave will be prorated for those joining or leaving part-way through the year on the basis of completed months of service. Annual leave days will be spread proportionately through the school closure periods, for example with 2 days in each half term, and the majority within the summer break.

You will receive payment for any outstanding statutory leave entitlement untaken; alternatively, any payment made in excess of your statutory entitlement will be deducted on leaving.

Holiday pay for irregular hours workers and part-year workers will be calculated as 12.07% of actual hours worked in a pay period.

Time Off (excluding annual leave)

The Trust is committed to supporting individuals who need an agreed period of time away from the workplace in order to deal with matters relating to their life outside of work, and has clear parameters within which colleagues can request time off for a range of reasons. Time off procedures do not form part of your contract of employment and may be varied from time to time.

We aim to:

- Set high standards of expectation consistent with the school community expectations of our organisation and relevant professional standards;
- Apply consistent and fair procedures in accordance with good practice and equal opportunities;
- Adhere to employment legislation and guidance in relation to time off.

All leave must be agreed in advance, where appropriate. Disciplinary procedures may be instigated where leave has not been agreed prior to taking.

Accountabilities

The Headteacher is accountable for ensuring that a sufficient level of staffing is in place within their school at all times to ensure no detrimental impact on outcomes for young people.

The line manager, Headteacher, Director or panel making a decision about time off is accountable for the decision and must ensure that any formal procedures have been followed. Any determination made must be evidenced as fair in all of the circumstances and that any decision which is taken is reasonable, fair and consistent.

All colleagues have a responsibility to attend work regularly and should, where possible, take steps to minimise any impact of time off on the Trust. Colleagues should ensure that public duties undertaken do not conflict with the work of, nor draw into question their loyalty to, the Trust.

Dependants

For the purpose of time off, a dependant is defined as:

- Spouse or civil partner;
- Child or step child;
- Parent or step parent;
- Siblings or step-siblings;
- In-laws;
- A person living in the employee's household (not a tenant, lodger or employee);
- A person who reasonably relies on the employee for assistance in the event of accident, illness or injury;
- A person who reasonably relies on the employee to make arrangements for care when it is disrupted or terminated.

Sickness Absence

You are required to comply with the Trust's Sickness Absence Policy and should refer to that policy to ensure you understand the requirements.

You are required to contact your Headteacher/line manager in person by 7.00am if you will be absent from work due to your own illness, on that day, for each day of absence. If you expect to be absent the following

day you should inform your line manager as soon as possible the afternoon before. Sickness absence cannot be used to cover time off required to care for another's illness.

On your return to work (after an absence of 7 consecutive calendar days or less, regardless of the days you work) you should complete a Self-Certification Form and contact your office staff to make arrangements for your return to work interview which will be held with your line manager.

If you are absent for 8 or more consecutive calendar days (regardless of the days you work), you will need to provide the Trust with a Fit Note covering the relevant days of absence (day 8 onwards). On your return, you should contact your office staff to make arrangements for your return to work interview which will be held with your line manager.

If you are absent for 8 or more days, we may discuss keeping in touch with you during your absence. We will agree with you how often the contact should be (or not), how contact will be made, and who you would like to make contact.

For those staff in administrative or financial roles, the Trust may nominate another member of staff to access your email and other application accounts in order to ensure the smooth running of the business if your absence is likely to be long enough to necessitate this. The Trust reserves the right to change the password access to any Trust systems in this instance.

In the return to work interview, your line manager will discuss with you any phased return outlined by a Fit Note, or any reasonable adjustments which may need to be made to reduce absence and support you in attending work.

Medical Appointments

There is no statutory right to paid or unpaid time off to attend medical appointments for yourself or dependents.

You will be granted paid time off to attend a first hospital appointment with a consultant, or an appointment for tests and scans. If further appointments are required, there is an expectation that they will be arranged at the start or end of your working day or when it is least disruptive for the school. If this is not possible, you should speak to your line manager as soon as possible. Time off to attend further appointments **may** be granted as paid time off, but may also need to be taken as unpaid leave. The Trust will request evidence of the appointments e.g. an appointment letter, in order to release you at any time.

If you need to attend a medical or dental appointment on an emergency basis, reasonable paid time off will be granted under the Emergency Leave procedure.

All other routine medical appointments including blood tests and regular check-ups should be arranged in your own time.

Any employee who has a disability, as defined by the Equality Act 2010, may be granted paid time off to attend medical appointments directly related to their medical condition as a reasonable adjustment. The employee should have a discussion with their line manager about the frequency and nature of such appointments.

Where you are required to attend hospital for a procedure and are unable to attend work, this will be regarded as sickness absence and the Sickness Absence Policy should be followed.

Pregnancy Related Illness

All pregnant employees should inform their line manager as soon as is practicably possible if they are absent with a pregnancy related illness. If the absence begins after the beginning of the fourth week before expected week of childbirth, maternity leave will automatically commence.

Compassionate Leave

Compassionate leave **may** be granted in certain circumstances of personal distress. You can request paid absence for compassionate leave for up to 3 days (FTE) in an academic year. This covers situations such as when:

- a dependant is diagnosed with a serious illness;
- a dependant dies;
- a dependant's funeral.

The length of time granted will be at the discretion of the Headteacher and is currently under review.

Time off **may** be granted for attendance at funerals of people other than dependents (for example, work colleagues), at the Headteacher's discretion, this is likely to be unpaid.

It is unlikely that a request for compassionate leave would be refused but on such occasions the line manager will explain carefully the reasons for turning down the request. The employee has a right of appeal where a request for compassionate leave has been declined. The appeal should be put in writing to the line manager no later than 5 working days after notification of the refusal.

Carers Leave

All employees are entitled to up to one week's unpaid Carer's Leave within a rolling 12 month period if they are caring for a dependent with a long term care need. A "long-term care need" is defined as an illness or injury (either physical or mental) that requires or is likely to require care for more than three months, a disability under the Equality Act 2010, or issues related to old age.

Carer's Leave can be applied for using the Carers Leave Application Form, and ideally should be at least one working week before the leave required, but a minimum of 3 working days, or the number of day's leave requested, whichever is longer.

Leave can be taken in minimum half day blocks, up to one full week. Leave does not need to be consecutive. For the purposes of Carer's Leave, "working day" means the period in which an employee is normally expected or required to work on the day the leave is to be taken.

The Trust reserves the right to postpone the taking of leave if it is considered the school/Trust would be unduly disrupted. The Trust will provide written notice within 7 working days of the request if the leave is to be postponed, outlining the reasons for postponement. A revised leave date will be suggested, this will be within a month of the original date requested.

Parental Bereavement Leave

As an organisation we are committed to supporting employees, particularly during difficult life events, such as the loss of a child or children. Following the introduction of the Parental Bereavement Leave Regulations

on 6th April 2020, this policy sets our commitment to supporting bereaved parents.

This applies to employees including temporary, fixed term staff and apprentices regardless of length of service (unless otherwise specified in the relevant section of the document) who have suffered the loss of a child or children (under the age of 18) on or after 6th April 2020. This also applies to parents who suffer a stillbirth after 24 weeks of pregnancy.

This procedure does not form part of your contract of employment and may be varied from time to time. The procedure does not apply once you have left the organisation.

The CEO is accountable for ensuring that Headteachers are trained to implement this policy, understand the entitlements and have the appropriate skills to manage sensitive conversations during an employee's time of grief.

Where you are absent due to sickness during a time of bereavement, the Sickness AbsenceProcedure will apply as normal.

As appropriate we may arrange for you to see Occupational Health to assess your fitness for work and understand how best to support you on your return to work. We may also discuss access to counselling services if that will help you. You can also self-refer to both Occupational Health and the counselling service.

Eligibility

Regardless of your length of service, you can take parental bereavement leave if, at the time of the child's death, you are:

a. the child's parent;
b. adopter of a child providing the placement has not been disrupted;
c. the 'intended parent' having applied, or intended to apply during the period of 6 months beginning with the day of the child's birth for a relevant parental order;
d. 'parent in fact' where for a continuous period of at least four weeks ending with the day the child dies, you have been living with the child and had day to day responsibility for the child. You are not a 'parent in fact' if:
    i. The parent of the child or any individual with responsibility for the child lives with you; **or**
    ii. You have been paid to look after the child;
e. partner of the parent, whether of a different sex or the same sex, who lives with the child in an enduring family relationship but you are not a relative. A relative (full blood or half blood) is defined as parent, grandparent, sister, brother, aunt or uncle.

Amount of Parental Bereavement Leave

The minimum amount of parental bereavement leave that may be taken is one week, leave cannot be taken as individual days. You may take either one or two week's leave at any time within the period of 56 weeks beginning on the date of the child's death. This entitlement applies to each child that dies.

If you take two weeks' leave, the weeks do not have to be consecutive.

Taking Parental Bereavement Leave
You must provide notice to take parental bereavement leave which includes the following information:
- Date of child's death;
- Date on which you intend parental bereavement leave to commence; **and**
- Whether you are taking one or two weeks.

If you begin parental bereavement leave within 56 days beginning with the date of the child's death, notice must be provided:
- Before commencing work on the first day of absence for parental bereavement leave in that week; or
- As soon as is reasonably practicable.

Notice can be in the form of a phone call or email to your line manager.

If you begin parental bereavement leave after 56 days of the child's death (but within 56 weeks), you must give at least one week's notice of your intention to take parental bereavement leave.

Cancelling Parental Bereavement Leave
If you have asked to begin parental bereavement leave within the first 56 days of the date of the child's death, you can cancel the leave, as long as you inform your line manager before the commencement of the parental bereavement leave.

If you have asked to begin parental bereavement leave more than 56 days after the child's death, you can cancel the leave by giving your line manager at least one week's notice.

You cannot cancel parental bereavement leave that has already commenced.

Commencement of Other Statutory Leave during Parental Bereavement Leave
If you have commenced a period of parental bereavement leave and before it is due to end, you begin another period of statutory leave e.g. maternity or paternity leave, the parental bereavement leave ends immediately before the start of the other period of statutory leave. Any remaining entitlement to parental bereavement leave may be taken:
- After the end of the other statutory period of leave (but within the permitted period for bereavement leave); and
- Must be taken in a single consecutive period.

You should inform your line manager when you intend to take the remaining period of parental bereavement leave giving notice as set out earlier. Where any remaining entitlement to bereavement leave includes part of a week as a result of another period of statutory leave commencing, it will be deemed to be a week for the purpose of notice requirements.

Returning to work following Parental Bereavement Leave
You have the right to resume working in the same job when returning to work from parental bereavement leave if the period of leave, when added to any other period of statutory leave (e.g. maternity leave, paternity leave, adoption leave, or shared parental leave) in relation to the same child, is 26 weeks or less.

You are entitled to return to another job that is suitable and appropriate for you, rather than the same job, if:

- the period of leave taken is more than 26 weeks, when added to most other periods of statutory leave taken in relation to the same child; **and**
- it is not reasonably practicable to return you to the same job.

Time off for Emergencies

From time to time urgent situations arise for which employees need to be absent from work, such as emergency child care or a burst water main at your place of residence.

You are entitled to reasonable unpaid time off to deal with unexpected and emergency events. You are not entitled to use this type of leave on an unlimited basis.

The Trust will give up to 1.5 paid days (pro rata) in total per rolling 12 months to deal with these emergencies at the discretion of the Headteacher. Appropriate notification procedures should be followed. This is not to be viewed as additional absence leave, it is for emergencies or significant events only.

This scheme is intended to cover genuine emergencies or unforeseen circumstances. In all circumstances you should, as soon as is practicable, discuss with your line manager the circumstances surrounding your need for time off.

The matter must be unforeseen or unexpected and an immediate crisis or emergency. For the purposes of this policy, an emergency is defined as:

- Providing immediate assistance when a dependent falls ill, is injured or assaulted;
- The need to make immediate arrangements to provide care to a dependent who is ill or injured;
- Dealing with the first day of unexpected disruption or termination of care arrangements for a dependent.

This list is not exhaustive.

Some examples of an emergency are:

- Employee's spouse has an accident and needs to attend hospital;
- Taking child to alternative childcare if nursery is closed;
- Caring for a dependent on the first day of their illness.

Emergency time off is not intended to be used for:

- Attending a planned appointment or operation with a dependent;
- Looking after a child during a school holiday;
- Providing long term care for a child;
- Providing care for a child <u>after</u> the first day of changed arrangements.

Notification requirements

You must notify your line manager as soon as is reasonably practicable when the emergency arises. You must inform your line manager of the reason for the absence and how long you expect to be absent for.

If you do not return to work when expected, the school may telephone you again and reassess the request for ongoing time off for emergencies. Time off for emergencies once the allocation has been used will be unpaid.

Fertility Treatment

In order to qualify for time off for fertility treatment, you must have a minimum of 3 year's continuous service.

It is the policy of the Trust to grant up to 3 days paid leave in any academic year for fertility treatment. The leave will be paid at your normal rate of basic pay. This entitlement also applies to an employee whose partner is undergoing fertility treatment, providing they meet the eligibility requirements.

If you require further time off beyond the number of days permitted by this policy, this may be granted at the discretion of the line manager, but may be unpaid.

If you wish to take advantage of this provision, you must:

- inform your line manager as soon as plans to undergo fertility treatment have been confirmed;
- provide a statement from a qualified medical practitioner that fertility treatment is recommended and approved;
- produce an appointment card or letter for each occasion on which leave is requested;
- try to arrange appointments at times of the day that will cause least disruption to the school;
- give as much notice as possible of the days on which leave is required.

Applications for leave should be made in writing to your line manager and the specified documentation must be provided.

Effects of the treatment

If the effects of the fertility treatment incapacitate you and you are unable to attend work, this will be treated and managed as sickness absence in accordance with the Trust's Sickness AbsencePolicy. Normal sickness absence reporting and management procedures apply.

Ante Natal Care

All pregnant employees are entitled to paid time off to keep appointments for antenatal care made on the advice of a registered medical practitioner, registered midwife or registered health visitor. Antenatal care is not restricted to medical examinations, for example, it could include relaxation classes and parent craft classes as long as these are advised by a registered medical practitioner, registered midwife or registered health visitor. You must also be prepared to show your line manager an appointment card or document showing the appointment has been made. Line managers will allow reasonable paid time off for this. Where you are able to arrange ante-natal appointments outside of working hours, you should try to do so.

Other staff are entitled to take up to 6.5 hours unpaid leave per appointment, to accompany a pregnant woman to 2 antenatal appointments, if they are:

- the baby's father;
- the expectant mother's spouse or civil partner;
- in a long-term relationship with the expectant mother;
- the intended parent (if you're having a baby through a surrogacy arrangement).

Maternity Leave

All pregnant employees are entitled to take up to 26 weeks Ordinary Maternity Leave and up to 26 weeks Additional Maternity Leave, making a total of 52 weeks continuous leave. This is regardless of the number of hours they work or their length of service. Additional Maternity Leave begins on the day after Ordinary Maternity Leave ends.

Immediately after childbirth there is a minimum period of Compulsory Maternity Leave that an employee must take and before which she may not return to work. The period of compulsory maternity leave lasts for two weeks from the date of childbirth. Ordinary Maternity Leave can start at any time after the beginning of the 11th week before the employee's expected week of childbirth (unless her child is born prematurely before that date in which case it will start earlier).

Maternity leave will start on whichever date is the earlier of:

- your chosen start date;
- the day after you give birth; **or**
- the day after any day on which you are absent for a pregnancy-related reason after the beginning of the 4 weeks before the expected week of childbirth.

Maternity leave can only be triggered by pregnancy-related reason from the beginning of the 4th week before the expected week of Childbirth. If you are absent with a pregnancy-related reason during this period your maternity leave will start on the day following the first day on which you were absent. Your SMP, if entitled, will also start on this day and run for 39 weeks.

Notifying the Trust of Pregnancy

To be eligible for maternity leave you are legally required to formally notify your employer of certain information. Accordingly, on becoming pregnant, you should notify your line manager in writing by the end of the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth (EWC) or as soon as is reasonably practicable of the following:

- that you are pregnant;
- your EWC;
- the date your maternity leave will begin. This cannot be earlier than the beginning of the 11th week before the expected week of childbirth.

The Trust can provide you with a template for this letter if you would like.

The MATB1 certificate should be given to your line manager as soon as provided by the Doctor or Midwife.

Employee's Notice Period for changing original commencement date of maternity leave

It will be possible for you to change the date your leave commences provided you give 28 days' notice before the original date or the new date you wish your leave to commence, whichever is the earlier.

Stillbirth

If the pregnancy results in a stillbirth after 24 weeks you qualify for full maternity benefits and leave.

If the baby is born alive at any point in the pregnancy but later dies you qualify for full maternity benefits and leave.

Paternity Leave & Maternity Support Leave

Paternity leave is available to employees on the birth of their child but is also available for adopters where a child has been placed for adoption after that date.

Maternity support leave is available to an employee who is the child's father, or partner/nominated carer of an expectant mother at or around the time of the birth. A nominated carer is the person nominated by the mother to assist in the care of the child and to provide support to the mother.

To be eligible for paternity/maternity support leave you must:

- have or expect to have responsibility for the child's upbringing;
- be the biological father of the child OR the mother/adopter's spouse/partner/civil partner/same sex partner;

Eligible employees will be entitled to take either one or two complete consecutive weeks' paternity/maternity support leave (not to be taken as odd days) within the first year of the child's arrival in the home.

You can choose to start your leave:

- In the case of birth of a child, from the date of the child's birth (whether this is earlier or later than expected), or from another date as long as it is after the birth;
- In the case of adoption of a child, from the date the child is placed with you or from another date as long as it is after the child has been placed with you.

Your leave can start on any day of the week on or following the child's birth or being placed with you for adoption, but must be completed:

- within 1 year of the actual birth or the placement of the child; **or**
- if the child is born early, within the period from the actual birth up to 1 year after the expected week of childbirth.

Only one period of leave is available irrespective of whether more than one child is born.

Notice of your Intention to take Paternity/Maternity Support Leave

Before the 15th week before expected week of delivery (EWC), or in the case of adoption within 7 days of being notified that a child has been matched, unless it is not reasonably practicable, you must inform your manager in writing of the following:

- the EWC or the date you were notified that you were matched with a child for adoption;
- that you intend to take paternity/maternity support leave;

You will also need to produce a copy of the mother's MATB1 (Maternity Certificate) or proof of adoption dates.

In order to take leave, you will need to give your manager four working weeks notice of the following:

- whether you wish to take one or two weeks leave; **and**
- when you want the leave to start.

You can change your mind about the start date of leave provided you give your manager at least 14 days notice, unless this is not reasonably practicable.

Bereaved Partner's Paternity Leave

Our Trust is committed to supporting employees, particularly during difficult life events, such as the death of a child's primary carer. Following the introduction of the Bereaved Partner's Paternity Leave Regulations on 6th April 2026, this policy sets out our commitment to supporting bereaved partners.

This policy applies to all employees including temporary staff, fixed term staff, and apprentices regardless of length of service (unless otherwise specified in the relevant section of the document) in circumstances where a child's primary carer dies and the child is under one year old or within the first year of adoption.

This procedure does not form part of your contract of employment and may be varied from time to time. The procedure does not apply once you have left the organisation. Employees will not be subject to detriment for taking bereaved partner's paternity leave.

Eligibility

In a birth case, you may be entitled to take leave if the child's mother has died and you are the father of a child or you are not the child's father but, immediately before the death of the child's mother, was married to, or was the civil partner or the partner of, the child's mother, and the child is under one year old.

In an adoption case, you may be entitled to take leave if you were married to, or were the civil partner or the partner of, the child's adopter on the date on which the child was placed for adoption or immediately before the death of the child's adopter, and the child is within the first year of adoption.

In an overseas adoption case, you must have been married to, or the civil partner or the partner of, the child's adopter on the date on which the child's adopter received the official notification, or immediately before the death of the child's adopter and the child is within the first year of adoption.

In a parental order case, you may be entitled to take leave if you were married to, or were the civil partner or the partner of, the child's primary parental order parent on the date on which the child was born, or immediately before the death of the child's primary parental order parent and the child is under one year old.

You must have main responsibility for the upbringing of the child and the purpose of the leave must be to care for the child.

Commencement and Duration of Leave

Eligible employees may take a single period of up to 52 weeks' leave. Leave can only be taken after the bereavement date and within the 52-week paternity leave eligibility period, which begins from either:

- the day after the child is born,
- the day after the child is placed for adoption (for adoption in Great Britain), or
- the day after the child enters Great Britain (for overseas adoption).

Where the bereavement date occurs within the last two weeks of the paternity leave eligibility period, the eligibility period will be extended and you will be entitled to a maximum of two weeks' leave. During bereaved partner's paternity leave you are entitled to the benefit of your normal terms and conditions of employment, except wages/salary, and you are bound by any obligations arising under those terms and conditions except in so far as they are inconsistent with the right to bereaved partner's paternity leave.

Where possible, you should book and take your annual leave entitlement in the current holiday year. However, if you are unable to take all your statutory minimum entitlement to annual leave because you were on bereaved partner's paternity leave, you are entitled to carry over untaken annual leave into the following leave year.

Notice Requirements

You must give notice of your intention to take bereaved partner's paternity leave.

If you wish to start the leave within the first eight weeks following the bereavement date, you must give us notice before you are due to start work on your first day of absence. You can give notice orally or in writing.

The notice must set out:

- the bereavement date,
- the date you want your leave to start, and
- the date on which either the child was born, placed for adoption, or entered Great Britain for adoption.

If you wish to start the leave after the initial eight-week period following the bereavement date, you must give us at least one week's notice in writing.

This must include the information set out above in addition to:

- the date you intend to return to work,
- a declaration that the leave will be for the purpose of caring for the child and that the child's mother or main adopter has died, and
- a declaration that you have an eligible relationship with the mother or main adopter.

If you start your leave within eight weeks of the bereavement date and you give us notice of your intention to take leave orally, you must also give us notice in writing of the date you intend to return to work. If your intended return date is more than eight weeks following the bereavement date, the written notice must also include the above declarations. You must give us the written notice no more than eight weeks after the bereavement date and at least one week before your intended return date.

Amending leave start date

You may change your mind about the date you want your leave to start, provided you notify us.

If you intended to start the leave within the first eight weeks following the bereavement date, you must give us notice that you wish to vary the start date of your leave before the last notified leave start date and, where the new leave start date is no more than eight weeks after the bereavement date, before the new leave start date.

If you intended to start the leave more than eight weeks following the bereavement date, you must give us notice that you wish to vary the start date of your leave at least one week before the last notified leave start date and at least one week before the new leave start date.

Where the new leave start date is no more than eight weeks after the bereavement date, you can give the notice orally or in writing. Where the new leave start date is more than eight weeks after the bereavement date, you must give us notice in writing.

Cancelling Leave

You may cancel your leave by giving us notice in writing.

Where the last notified leave start date is no more than eight weeks after the bereavement date, you must give us notice that you wish to cancel your leave before that date.

Where the last notified leave start date is more than eight weeks after the bereavement date, you must give us notice that you wish to cancel your leave at least one week before that date.

Amending return to work date

You may change your intended return date by giving us notice of your new intended return date in writing.

Where the last notified intended return date is no more than eight weeks after the bereavement date, you must give us the notice at least one week before that last notified intended return date and at least one week before the new intended return date.

Where the last notified intended return date is more than eight weeks after the bereavement date, you must give us the notice at least eight weeks before that last notified intended return date and at least eight weeks before the new intended return date.

Postponing Your return to Work

If you want to return to work but haven't notified us as set out above, we may postpone your return to work to a date when you would have returned if you had followed the notice requirements. We will always give you notice in writing of the postponement.

We will not postpone your return to work past the end of the paternity leave eligibility period. If we postpone your return to work, you will not be entitled to your usual remuneration until the date set out in the notice of postponement if you return to work before that date. This will apply unless we have revoked the notice of postponement in writing.

Entitlement When the Purpose of Caring for the Child Cannot be Met

You may still be entitled to leave where you would be eligible but for a "relevant event" happening. These events are:

- the death of the child,
- the child being returned after being placed for adoption,
- the child ceasing to live with you (overseas adoption).

In these circumstances, you are entitled to take bereaved partner's paternity leave until the earliest of:

- eight weeks following the end of the week the relevant event occurred in,
- the end of the 52-week paternity leave eligibility period.

Where this situation arises, in addition to following the notification requirements set out above, you must inform us of the date and nature of the relevant event before your first day of bereaved partner's paternity leave following the relevant event. You can do this orally or in writing.

Keeping in Touch Days

You may by mutual agreement, work for up to 10 days during your leave. For this purpose, any work carried out on any day, even just an hour's work, is deemed to constitute "a day's work". Any days' work done under this provision will not have the effect of extending the total duration of the bereaved partner's paternity leave period. Payment in respect of these "keeping in touch" days will be agreed beforehand.

Returning to Work

If you return to work after a period of 26 weeks or less of bereaved partner's paternity leave, you are entitled to return to the same job, with the same terms and conditions, in which you were employed before your absence.

If you return to work after a period of more than 26 weeks' bereaved partner's paternity leave, you are entitled to return to the same job in which you were employed before your absence or, if that is not reasonably practicable, to another job which is both suitable and appropriate for you in the circumstances on terms no less favourable. Your manager will explain how this affects you based on your individual circumstances.

Use of Bereaved Partner's Paternity Leave

Employees who take time off under this policy for reasons other than those for which the statutory right to bereaved partner's paternity leave is intended may be subject to investigation and subsequent disciplinary proceedings.

Shared Parental Leave

Shared Parental Leave (SPL) enables eligible parents to choose how to share the care of their child during the first year after birth or adoption. Its purpose is to give parents more flexibility in considering how to best care for, and bond with, their child. All eligible employees have a statutory right to take SPL.

SPL is available to parents of children expected to be born or placed with them for adoption or via surrogacy arrangements.

Mothers and partners remain entitled to maternity, paternity and adoption leave but the mother may choose to return to work after 2 weeks and the remaining 50 weeks leave can be taken by them or their partner as SPL.

The procedure applies to all employees but does not form part of the contract of employment and can be varied from time to time and in consultation with the recognised trade unions.

Who is eligible for Shared Parental Leave?
SPL can only be used by two people:

- The mother/adopter; **and**
- One of the following:
    - the father of the child (in the case of birth); **or**
    - the spouse, civil partner or partner of the child's mother/ adopter.

Both parents must share the main responsibility for the care of the child at the time of the birth or placement for adoption.

Additionally, an employee seeking to take SPL must satisfy each of the following criteria:

- the mother/adopter of the child must be/have been entitled to statutory maternity/adoption leave or if not entitled to statutory maternity/adoption leave they must be/have been entitled to statutory maternity/adoption pay or maternity allowance and must have ended or given notice to reduce any maternity/adoption entitlements;
- the employee must still be working for the Trust at the start of each period of SPL;
- the employee must pass the 'continuity test' requiring them to have a minimum of 26 weeks' service at the end of the 15th week before the child's expected due date/matching date;
- the employee's partner must meet the 'employment and earnings test' requiring them in the 66 weeks leading up to the child's expected due date/matching date have worked for at least 26 weeks and earned an average of at least £30 a week in any 13 of those weeks;
- the employee must correctly notify the Trust of their entitlement and provide evidence as required.

The Shared Parental Leave entitlement
Eligible employees may be entitled to take up to 50 weeks SPL during the child's first year in their family.

The number of weeks available is calculated using the mother's/adopter's entitlement to maternity/adoption leave, which allows them to take up to 52 weeks' leave. If they reduce their maternity/adoption leave entitlement, then they and/or their partner may opt in to the SPL system and take any remaining weeks as SPL.

A mother/adopter may curtail their entitlement to maternity/adoption leave by returning to work before the full entitlement of 52 weeks has been taken, or they may give notice to curtail their leave at a specified future date.

SPL can commence as follows:

- the mother can take SPL after she has taken the legally required two weeks of maternity leave immediately following the birth of the child;
- the adopter can take SPL after taking at least two weeks of adoption leave;
- the father/partner/spouse can take SPL immediately following the birth/placement of the child, but may first choose to exhaust any paternity leave entitlements (as the father/partner cannot take paternity leave or pay once they have taken any SPL or Shared Parental Pay (ShPP).

Where a mother/adopter gives notice to curtail their maternity/adoption entitlement then the mother/adopter's partner can take leave while the mother/adopter is still using their maternity/adoption entitlements.

SPL will generally commence on the employee's chosen start date specified in their leave booking notice, or in any subsequent variation notice. If the employee is eligible to receive it, ShPP may be paid for some, or all, of the SPL period.

SPL must end no later than one year after the birth/placement of the child. Any SPL not taken by the first birthday or first anniversary of placement for adoption is lost.

Notifying the Trust of an entitlement to Shared Parental Leave

If you are entitled and intending to take SPL, you must give your line manager notification of your entitlement and intention to take to SPL, at least eight weeks before you can take any period of SPL. This should be done by completing the appropriate form. The form should then be submitted to your line manager in line with the timescales outlined below.

Part of the eligibility criteria requires you to provide the Trust with correct notification. Notification must be in writing and requires each of the following:

- your name;
- the name of the other parent;
- the start and end dates of any maternity/adoption leave or pay, or maternity allowance, taken in respect of the child and the total amount of SPL available;
- the date on which the child is expected to be born and the actual date of birth or, in the case of an adopted child, the date on which the employee was notified of having been matched with the child and the date of placement for adoption;
- the amount of SPL you and your partner each intend to take;
- a non-binding indication of when you expect to take the leave.

You must provide the Trust with a signed declaration stating:

- that you meet, or will meet, the eligibility conditions and are entitled to take SPL;
- that the information you have given is accurate;
- if you are not the mother/adopter you must confirm that you are either the father of the child or the spouse, civil partner or partner of the mother/adopter;
- that should you cease to be eligible you will immediately inform the Trust.

You must provide the Trust with a signed declaration from your partner confirming:

- their name, address and national insurance number (or a declaration that they do not have a national insurance number);
- that they are the mother/adopter of the child or they are the father of the child or are the spouse, civil partner or partner of the mother/adopter;
- that they satisfy the 'employment and earnings test' (see "Who is eligible for Shared Parental Leave?" above), and had at the date of the child's birth or placement for adoption the main responsibility for the child, along with the employee;
- that they consent to the amount of SPL that you intend to take;

- that they consent to the Trust processing the information contained in the declaration form; and (in the case whether the partner is the mother/adopter) that they will immediately inform you should they cease to satisfy the eligibility conditions.

Requesting further evidence of eligibility
The Trust may, within 14 days of the SPL entitlement notification being given, request:
- the name and business address of the partner's employer (where your partner is no longer employed or is self employed their contact details must be given instead);
- in the case of biological parents, a copy of the child's birth certificate (or, where one has not been issued, a declaration as to the time and place of the birth);
- in the case of an adopted child, documentary evidence of the name and address of the adoption agency, the date on which they were notified of having been matched with the child and the date on which the agency expects to place the child for adoption.

In order to be entitled to SPL, you must produce this information within 14 days of the Trust's request.

Discussions regarding Shared Parental Leave
If you are considering or taking SPL you are encouraged to contact your manager to arrange an informal discussion as early as possible regarding your potential entitlement, to talk about your plans and to enable the Trust to support you.

Your manager may arrange an informal meeting with you to talk about your intentions and how you plan to use your SPL entitlement.

The purpose of the meeting is to discuss in detail the leave proposed and what will happen while you are away from work. Where it is a request for discontinuous leave the discussion may also focus on how the leave proposal could be agreed, whether a modified arrangement would be agreeable to you and the Trust, and what the outcome may be if no agreement is reached.

The manager must ensure that where an employee is entitled to Occupational Maternity/Adoption pay, the employee understands that this entitlement ceases if they commence with the SPL option.

Booking Shared Parental Leave
In addition to notifying the Trust of entitlement to SPL/ShPP, you must also give notice to take the leave by completing the appropriate form.

You have the right to submit three notifications specifying leave periods you are intending to take. Each notification may contain either (a) a single period of weeks of leave; or (b) two or more weeks of discontinuous leave, where you intend to return to work between periods of leave.

SPL can only be taken in complete weeks but may begin on any day of the week. You must book SPL by giving the correct notification at least eight weeks before the date on which you wish to start the leave and (if applicable) receive ShPP.

Continuous leave notifications
A notification can be for a period of continuous leave, which means a notification of a number of weeks taken in a single unbroken period of leave.

You have the right to take a continuous block of leave notified in a single notification, so long as it does not exceed the total number of weeks of SPL available to you, and the Trust has been given at least eight weeks' notice.

Discontinuous leave notifications

A single notification may also contain a request for two or more periods of discontinuous leave, which means asking for a set number of weeks of leave over a period of time, with breaks between the leave where you return to work.

Where there is concern over accommodating discontinuous leave, your manager or you the employee may seek to arrange in advance a private meeting to discuss the notification with a view to agreeing an arrangement that meets both the needs of you and the Trust.

The manager will consider a discontinuous leave notification but has the right to refuse if there are valid business or operational reasons. In the event of a refusal the manager will explain the reason and the evidential basis for refusing and will write to you to confirm the reason and the basis for refusing. If you are unhappy as to the reason for the refusal you may raise this as an issue through the Grievance Procedure. If the leave pattern is refused, you can choose to take the leave in a single continuous block.

Responding to a Shared Parental Leave notification

Once your line manager receives your leave booking notice, it will be dealt with as soon as possible, but a response will be provided no later than the 14th calendar day after the leave request was made and will be confirmed in writing.

All requests for discontinuous leave will be carefully considered on a case by case basis and will take into account the potential benefits to you. Agreeing to one request will not set a precedent or create the right for another employee to be granted a similar pattern of SPL. Equally the principles of acting in a fair, consistent and non-discriminatory way in responding to requests will be applied.

You will be informed in writing of the decision as soon as is reasonably practicable, but no later than the 14th day after the leave notification was made. The request may be granted in full or in part: for example, the Trust may propose a modified version of the request.

If a discontinuous leave pattern is refused you may withdraw the request, without detriment, on or before the 15th day after the notification was given; or may take the total number of weeks in the notice in a single continuous block. If you choose to take the leave in a single continuous block, you have until the 19th day from the date the original notification was given to choose when you want the leave period to begin. The leave cannot start sooner than 8 weeks from the date the original notification was submitted. If you do not choose a start date then the leave will begin on the first leave date requested in the original notification.

Variations to arranged Shared Parental Leave

You are permitted to vary or cancel an agreed and booked period of SPL, provided that you advise the Trust in writing at least 8 weeks before the date of any variation. Any new start date cannot be sooner than 8 weeks from the date of the variation request.

Any variation or cancellation notification made by you, including notice to return to work early, will usually count as a new notification reducing your right to book/vary leave by one. However, a change as a result of a child being born early, or as a result of the Trust requesting it be changed, and you being agreeable to the change, will not count as further notification. Any variation will be confirmed in writing by the Trust.

Shared Parental Leave "in Touch" days

You can agree to work for the Trust (or attend training) for up to 20 days during SPL without bringing your period of SPL to an end or impacting on their right to claim ShPP for that week. These are known as "Shared Parental Leave In Touch" or "SPLIT" days.

Any work carried out on a day or part of a day shall constitute a day's work for these purposes.

The Trust has no right to require you to carry out any work and is under no obligation to offer you any work during your SPL. Any work undertaken is a matter for agreement between the Trust and you.

An employee taking a SPLIT day will receive full pay for any day worked. If a SPLIT day occurs during a week when the employee is receiving ShPP, this will be effectively 'topped up' so that the individual receives full pay for the day in question. Any SPLIT days worked do not extend the period of SPL.

You may, with the agreement of the organisation, use SPLIT days to work part of a week during SPL. The Trust and you may use SPLIT days to effect a gradual return to work towards the end of a long period of SPL or to trial a possible flexible working pattern.

Adoption Leave

The adoption leave provisions apply to all employees where an approved agency notifies them of a match with a child and provides a basic right to a minimum of 26 weeks Ordinary Adoption Leave irrespective of hours worked or length of service. Additional Adoption Leave (unpaid) amounting to a further 26 weeks is also available. The period of Ordinary Adoption Leave may additionally attract 39 weeks Statutory Adoption Pay for those with at least 26 weeks service at the relevant date. This policy also covers situations where a child is adopted from overseas.

If you are notified of a match with a child for adoption, you should notify your line manager immediately to receive confirmation of statutory entitlements with regard to leave, adoption pay and notice periods.

Adoption leave can start:

- From the date of the child's placement (whether this is earlier or later than expected) or
- From a fixed date which can be up to 14 days before the expected week of placement.

In the case of an overseas adoption the leave can commence from the date the child enters Great Britain or from a date up to 28 days after the child enters Great Britain. If a child is being adopted from overseas you must have received a written notification from the overseas Authority confirming that you are eligible to adopt.

Leave can start on any day of the week. Only one period of leave is available irrespective of whether more than one child is placed.

If the child's placement ends during the adoption leave period, you will be able to continue the adoption leave for up to 8 weeks after the end of the placement. If a further placement is later arranged you will need to apply for another period of adoption leave.

Adoption Leave Eligibility

Adoption Leave and pay is available to individual employees who adopt a child. This paid leave will only be granted to one member of a couple where both are employed by the Trust (the couple may choose which partner takes adoption leave).

The partner of an individual who adopts or the other member of a couple who are adopting jointly, may be entitled to paternity leave or maternity support leave and pay.

Ordinary Adoption Leave

All employees are entitled to Ordinary Adoption Leave regardless of length of service or hours worked. Ordinary Adoption Leave is 26 weeks.

Additional Adoption Leave

You must have 26 weeks continuous service leading into the week in which you are told you have been matched with a child for adoption. If the child is being adopted from overseas you must have 26 weeks continuous service – either the 26 weeks ending with the week in which you receive your official notification (see below) or 26 weeks from the start of your employment. The reason for the slightly different rules for adopting from abroad is that it can take up to 12 months from the date of receiving the official notification to the time that the child enters Great Britain. The 26 week qualifying period can be completed either before you receive your official notification or at a later date before the leave and pay is due to begin.

Special Guardianship

A Special Guardianship Order gives a special guardian legal parental responsibility for a child, normally until they are 18 years old. However, the order does not remove parental responsibility from the child's birth parents. Employees granted this order have no entitlement to Adoption Leave. They will be entitled to other benefits that those with parental responsibilities get such as parental leave, right to request flexible working, and participation in the childcare voucher scheme.

Time off for Adoption Vetting Process

This applies to all individuals seeking to adopt regardless of length of service.

Although a number of days is not stipulated in the legislation, you are entitled to a "reasonable" amount of paid time off for this purpose. In terms of this policy it has been agreed that a maximum of 5 days should be sufficient in most cases. This paid leave will only be granted to one member of a couple where both are employed by the Trust.

How to Apply for Adoption Leave

In order to qualify for Adoption Leave, you must, within 7 days of being told you have been matched with a child (or as soon as is reasonably practicable), notify your line manager that you have been matched with a

child for adoption, the date you intend to take adoption leave and the date the child is expected to be placed with you.

In the case of an adoption from overseas you must, within 28 days of having received your official notification, inform the Trust of the date on which you received official notification and the date the child is expected to enter Great Britain. In addition, within 28 days of the child entering Great Britain, you must give further evidence of the date of entry (such as a plane ticket or entry clearance documents). You must give 28 day's notice of when you intend to take adoption leave.

You can amend the date that you want to start the Adoption Leave provided you give the Trust 28 day's notice (unless this is not reasonably practicable).

You should provide a copy of your 'Matching Certificate' or your 'Official Notification' (in relation to overseas adoptions) to your line manager as evidence of your entitlement to statutory adoption pay. The certificate should show the name and address of the adoption agency, the date that a child was matched with you for adoption and the date that the adoption is happening.

If a child is being adopted from overseas, you must have received a written notification from the overseas authority confirming that you are eligible to adopt.

Having received notification, the Manager / Headteacher should arrange for a letter to you to confirm that the Adoption Leave will start as agreed and also confirming the date that the Adoption Leave will end.

Standard Provisions relating to Maternity, Adoption, and Shared Parental Leave

Holiday Entitlement
You are entitled to accrue contractual leave during maternity / adoption / SPL leave. Depending on the timing in relation to the annual leave year, you may take annual leave before the leave commences or alternatively bring maternity / adoption / SPL leave forward so that annual leave can fit into the annual leave year. If you are unable to take annual leave before the start of your maternity / adoption / SPL leave due to an earlier date/birth, or where maternity / adoption leave overlaps with annual leave, an exception may be given to carry over the allowance that you would otherwise lose in the next year under the terms of the annual leave policy.

Pension Scheme during Maternity / Adoption / Shared Parental Leave
You are encouraged to seek advice on how maternity / adoption / shared parental leave is likely to affect your pension rights in the long term or how to buy back service. Advice can be sought from:

- The Pensions Section for employees in the Local Government Pension Scheme; **or**
- The Teacher Pensions or relevant professional associations for employees in the Teacher's Pension Scheme.

Returning to Work after Maternity / Adoption / Shared Parental Leave
If you are returning to work at the end of your full maternity / adoption / shared parental leave entitlement you will not have to give any further notification to your line manager.

It will be assumed that you are returning to work at the end of your Maternity/ Adoption / Shared Parental Leave on the date previously notified. If you intend to return early you must provide 8 week's notice, otherwise you simply return at the end of the period.

The employee returning from Ordinary Maternity / Adoption / Shared Parental Leave is entitled to return to the job in which they were employed. The employee returning from Additional Maternity / Adoption / Shared Parental Leave is entitled to return to the job in which they were employed unless that is not practicable, in which case they have the right to return to a job that is both suitable and appropriate.

If you no longer wish to return to work you will be effectively resigning and will need to give the Trust written notice of termination in accordance with your contract. Your line manager will ensure that you provide written confirmation that this is your intention.

Keeping in Touch days

Keeping in touch (KIT) days are intended to facilitate a smooth return to work for employees returning from Maternity/Adoption Leave. You can agree to work or attend training for up to 10 days during your period of Maternity / Adoption Leave without loss of benefits or bringing your Maternity / Adoption Leave to an end.

During the Maternity / Adoption Leave period the Trust has no right to expect you to undertake work (without prior mutual agreement), and similarly you have no right to demand this. Part of any day worked will count as one KIT day. You will be paid your full contractual hourly pay for any KIT day worked and this must not exceed a standard working day.

You will receive your statutory Maternity / Adoption Leave pay for the week but any statutory Maternity / Adoption Leave pay paid will be offset against any payments made for the KIT day. The leave period will not be extended by the number of KIT days worked. After 10 KIT days have been worked the current rules will continue and you will lose a week's Statutory Maternity / Adoption Leave pay for any week in which you work. Payments made for KIT days will be paid at the end of the Maternity / Adoption Leave period.

Neonatal Leave

Following the introduction of the Neonatal Care Leave and Miscellaneous Amendments Regulations 2025 and the Statutory Neonatal Care Pay (General) Regulations 2025, this policy sets our commitment to supporting parents of children requiring neonatal care and who are born on or after on 6th April 2025.

You are entitled to take one week of neonatal care leave for each consecutive seven-day period that your baby is receiving neonatal care, up to a maximum of 12 weeks.

Regardless of your length of service, you may take Neonatal Care Leave if you have parental or other prescribed responsibility for a baby who is receiving, or who has received, neonatal care.

This will apply if you are:

- the child's parent, intended parent, or partner of the child's mother at the date of birth
- in cases of adoption, the child's adopter, prospective adopter, or the partner of either, at the date the child is placed.

"Neonatal care" is defined in law as care of a medical or palliative kind lasting for at least seven consecutive

days which starts within 28 days beginning with the day after the child's birth. The medical care may be received in hospital, or out of hospital providing the child was originally an inpatient and the care is under the direction of a consultant. Neonatal care also covers babies receiving palliative or end of life care.

Giving Notice

You must give us notice in writing if you want to take neonatal care leave.

The notice must specify:

- your name
- the child's date of birth and date of placement if adoption
- the date(s) the child started receiving neonatal care
- the date neonatal care ended if the child is no longer receiving it
- the date you want the leave to begin
- the number of weeks' leave you want to take
- the declaration that you are taking the leave to care for the child
- the declaration that you meet the eligibility requirements.

You can take neonatal care leave during two periods:

"Tier one period" — starts from the day the child starts receiving neonatal care, ending with the seventh day after the child stops receiving neonatal care. Leave taken in this period:

- cannot be taken before the day after the first 7-day uninterrupted period of neonatal care
- can be taken in non-consecutive weeks

"Tier two period" — any period which is outside of tier one but you are entitled to neonatal care leave. Leave taken in this period must be taken consecutively.

If you wish to take neonatal care leave in the tier one period you must give us the required notice before you are due to start work on the first day of absence, unless it is not reasonably practicable to do so, to prevent any delays in accessing your entitlement.

If you wish to take neonatal care leave in the tier two period, you must give us the required notice no later than 15 days before the first day of leave when taking a single week, or no later than 28 days before the first day of leave when taking two or more weeks.

If you change your mind about taking neonatal care leave, you can withdraw your notice by following the same notice periods as above.

Your neonatal care leave will start on the day specified in your notice unless the leave is due to start on the same day as the notice is given, or you are at work on that day, then it will start the day after.

Taking Neonatal Care Leave

You must take the leave before the end of a period of 68 weeks beginning with the child's date of birth or date of placement in cases of adoption.

If you accrue neonatal care leave after already starting another period of statutory family leave, such as maternity or paternity leave, then you can take the neonatal care leave after the end of the statutory family leave, providing it is within 68 weeks beginning on the child's date of birth or placement.

Rights during Neonatal Care Leave

During Neonatal Care Leave, all terms and conditions of your employment will continue, except normal pay. Salary will be replaced by Statutory Neonatal Care Pay if you are eligible for it.

Returning to work following Neonatal Care leave

You have the right to return to work to the same job unless you return after a specific point at which you will have the right to return to a similar job on no less favourable terms if it is not practicable for you to return to the same job. Your manager will explain how this affects you based on your individual circumstances.

Parental Leave

Any employee is entitled to 18 unpaid weeks leave taken up to the child's 18th birthday. This is limited to a maximum of 4 weeks per year. This provision relates to each child born or adopted (in the case of multiple births, the entitlement is 13 weeks per child). A week's Parental Leave is equal to the length of time that you normally are required to work in a week. If your working week varies, the time off is based on an average working week.

You may use Parental Leave to take time off work to look after your child's welfare. This may include taking time off to look at new schools, extended visits to family who live in another country or to care for a child following an operation or treatment.

You are required to give the Trust 21 day's notice before the intended start date of the leave. A request for Parental Leave must be made in writing to your line manager. The following minimum notice should be given:

- 1 or 2 days leave: 1 week's notice;
- 2 days plus leave: 3 week's notice;
- Longer periods: no less than the period of parental leave requested.

Notice can be waived with the agreement of your manager.

Records of all Parental Leave granted will be maintained throughout your employment with the Trust. You can request details of your Parental Leave records at any time from your manager.

Parental Leave can be taken straight after birth or maternity, paternity or adoption leave.

Parental Leave must be taken in blocks or multiples of one week unless the Headteacher agrees otherwise. If the child is disabled, Parental Leave may be taken in days.

Requests for Parental Leave will be granted subject to the following circumstances:

- your leave will not unduly disrupt the business of your school;
- in all cases where the line manager believes there is a problem in granting the request, no decision will be taken until the circumstances have been discussed with you in a meeting, privately, in advance.

The Trust may postpone a requested period of Parental Leave for up to 6 months if your absence would unduly disrupt the operation of the school. The Trust are not permitted to postpone Parental Leave which is due to start on the day the child is born or placed for adoption. If your leave is postponed, your line manager will discuss the issue with you and will ensure you receive confirmation of the postponement arrangements in writing no later than 7 days after your notice to take leave, stating the reason for the postponement and giving you new dates of Parental Leave. The length of leave will be equivalent to your original request.

Parental Leave may not be granted in the following circumstances:

- Work is at a seasonal peak and your absence would have an unfair impact on employees' workloads;
- A significant number of staff from the school or Trust are absent from work already;
- Your absence would unduly harm the Trust.

Where a request for Parental Leave is not granted, you may be able to raise this as an issue through the Grievance Procedure.

Time off for public duties

This covers time off for:

- Public duties;
- Courts – justices of the peace, jury service, witnesses;
- Reserve forces and peace-time emergencies;
- Elections;
- Representative sport.

You may take time off for the public duties detailed within this Handbook in accordance with the guidelines given.

Where an allowance is claimable for loss of earnings, you should claim and pay the allowance to the Trust. All absences will be subject to service needs and must be agreed in advance by the line manager.

If the line manager is satisfied that time off will not be detrimental to the Trust, you may be granted, i.e. as a Justice of the Peace (JP) or member of a local authority:

- up to 18 days and 36 half days paid leave – which may be calculated on an hourly basis, subject to the total number of hours taken not exceeding the hourly equivalent of 18 days;

and

- up to 35 days or 70 half days without pay, which must be taken as full or half days, i.e. may not be calculated on an hourly basis.

For other public duties listed in the Employment Rights Act 1996, which do not include duties as a JP or member of a local authority:

- 9 full days or 18 half days with pay which may be calculated on an hourly basis, subject to the total number of hours taken not exceeding the hourly equivalent of 9 days;

and

- 9 full days or 18 half days without pay, which must be taken as full or half days i.e. may not be calculated on an hourly basis.

Those eligible to claim under both of the above schemes may only claim up to 208 hours in total.

For other public activities listed below, recognised by the Trust but not specified in the legislation, up to 35 full days or 70 half days with pay can be given. To be taken on a full day or half day basis, i.e. these may not be calculated on an hourly basis

- member of a committee or panel or similar body appointed by a Minister or local authority association
- co-opted member of a committee or sub-committee of a local authority (as defined in the Local Government Act 1972);
- a Lady Mayoress or Escort of the Chair of a District Council;
- examiner for a university, college, or other examining board or bodies. *

*Examiners and lecturers are allowed to keep any fees received from the appropriate bodies in respect of these duties.

Jury Service

Where you receive a summons to serve on a jury, you should report that fact immediately to your line manager. Leave of absence will be granted unless an exemption is secured. The Trust requests that you ask for a deferment of all Jury Service within term time and try to rearrange for school closure periods. Although not obliged under law, paid leave of absence will be granted to employees undertaking Jury Service.

When summoned for Jury Service, you will receive a form called "*Certificate of Loss of Earnings or Benefit*" from HMCS. You and the Trust should complete the relevant parts of the form, and the Trust will send it to the Trust's payroll provider along with the Notification of Jury Service.

You must use this to claim your loss of earnings from the Court and hand it to Court officials on the first day of attendance for Jury Service.

On completion of Jury Service you will receive a payment from HMCS for the total amount of earnings allowed by law. It should be noted that the 'loss' of earnings paid by HMCS will not, usually, amount to your normal earnings. You will also receive a certificate of attendance and an 'Advice Slip' explaining how the payment has been calculated.

You should give the 'Advice Slip' to the Trust's Finance Manager who will then make arrangements for the 'loss of earnings payment' to be reclaimed by the Trust. You will keep any travelling and subsistence expenses you have claimed from the court.

Witnesses in a Court Case

Employees called to be witnesses, defendants, or plaintiffs for the school or the County Council will be granted paid leave to attend court. Time off with pay will not be granted in respect of cases personal to you but managers will try to facilitate availability to attend court where possible.

Returning to the workplace

If you attend court for Jury Service or as a witness but are not required for a particular day, you should return to the workplace on that day. If you do not return to work this will be considered an unauthorised absence and you will not be paid for this time.

Reserve Forces

Mobilisation - Members of Reserved Forces will be released to meet government requirements and on return will be entitled to return to the job in which they were employed, unless that is not practicable, in which case they have the right to return to a job that is both suitable and appropriate. Requests for time off to volunteer where there is no compulsory mobilisation will be considered on a case by case basis. Specific advice will be sought from the HR provider on an individual basis.

Training - Volunteer Reservists may be required to undertake training for up to 16 days per annum. This is usually undertaken on Saturdays and Sundays. The onus is on you to arrange for training to be undertaken in off-duty time. Where this is not possible paid leave may be granted for mutually acceptable dates for this absence.

Annual Camp - Employees in the Territorial Army and Volunteer Reserve who are required to attend annual camp are allowed the two weeks as additional leave with pay.

Peace-time Emergencies - Employees who are called upon to assist at a peace – time emergency under emergency planning schemes (e.g. scientific advisers, members of Red Cross or St. John Ambulance) will be granted leave of absence with pay for such duty.

Elections

Assisting at the poll/count - You may be granted paid leave to assist in the poll or the count at elections. All absences of this nature are subject to service needs and must be agreed in advance with your line manager.

Local Election Candidates - One day's leave of absence without pay (the polling day) will be granted to an employee who contests a local election.

Candidates for parliamentary and European elections - Employees who stand as candidates at a General Election or a European Election will be granted leave of absence without pay for the period from nomination day to polling day inclusive.

Parliamentary Agents

Leave of absence without pay from nomination day to polling day inclusive will be granted to employees acting as Parliamentary Agents.

Party Political Conferences

Leave of absence is not granted to employees to enable them to attend party political conferences.

Representative Sport

The Trust has discretion to grant leave without pay to employees who are selected to represent their county or country in representative sport, or who are involved in a sport to a national or international level, in order to compete.

The Trust also has discretion to grant leave without pay to employees who have dependents who are selected to represent their county or country in representative sport, or who are involved in a sport to a national or international level, in order to compete.

In both cases, the Trust will need to consider the impact of absence on the business, and on other staff before making a decision.

Applying for Time Off

In all circumstances and unless specified differently in this Handbook, you should, as soon as is practicable, discuss with your line manager the circumstances surrounding the need for time off.

Requests will be considered carefully and sympathetically taking into account the individual situation. When considering a request, the Trust may request documentary evidence from you in support of the request.

There may be occasions where the need for time off is likely to continue beyond the entitled paid absence provided for (for example where a dependent has a longer term hospitalisation).

In these circumstances careful consideration should be given to other provisions available to assist you, such as annual leave, flexible leave or unpaid leave.

A copy of the request form, decision/outcome letter and any formal meeting notes will remain on your personnel file and/or be recorded on the Trust's electronic systems for the purposes of payroll processing.

Flexible Working Requests

The Trust recognises that flexible working can increase staff motivation, build better relationships with employees, increase staff retention, reduce employee stress, improve individual performance and provide a solution to the demands on the Leadership team. The outcomes of flexible working arrangements should contribute to the Trust improvement plan.

Where it is not detrimental to the effective provision of education, all staff within the Trust will be supported in balancing their work and home life.

All employees have the right to request flexible working from the first day of their employment, and to have their request considered seriously by their employer. Employees can make up to two requests in any 12 month period.

Legislative Framework Employment Act 2002: This broadly sets out the intention to provide the right for employees with children to request to work flexibly.

Equalities Act 2010: This Act sets out the duty to make reasonable adjustments where the employee has a disability.

When considering a request for flexible working the Trust will balance the needs of the individual with the need to maintain staffing levels at the Trust that meet the statutory and organisational requirements of the Trust.

The Trust will manage flexible working requests on the following principles:

- To value staff for their contribution to the Trust not their working pattern;
- To express the belief that the Trust and it's pupils will benefit from the flexible working arrangements through improved teaching and learning;
- To accept that the needs of the Trust and the staff will change over time;

- To ensure that flexible working requests are considered in a fair and consistent manner based on the needs of the Trust and the need to support the individual in attaining a work life balance.

The equality implications of any flexible working arrangements will be considered when considering any application for flexible working.

The Trust will not victimise individuals who work under flexible working arrangements or who request to work more flexibly.

Any agreed flexible working arrangements will be carefully planned and reviewed to ensure that work life balance is achieved.

Flexible working arrangements will be monitored, evaluated and reviewed at both an individual level through performance management and at a Trust level through the Trust improvement plan.

Flexible working arrangements can include:
- a request for a change to the number of hours they work;
- a request for a change to the pattern of hours worked;
- a request to perform some of the work from home for some of the time.

The Application process
Any request for flexible working must be made to your line manager using the relevant form, and dated.

You must specify a start date for the change and also provide the Trust with a minimum of one term's notice of the effective date.

Two applications for flexible working can be made per a rolling 12 month period. An accepted application will mean a permanent change to your terms and conditions of employment unless it is agreed to be for a specified period.

Within 14 calendar days of receiving the application your line manager will meet with you to discuss it.

Within 14 calendar days of the meeting to discuss the application your line manager will write to you either:
- Agreeing to the request and the start date;
- Rejecting the request, the reasons why and the right of appeal to the Governing body;
- Suggest that further action is necessary before they can make a decision. If more time is needed this must be agreed with you.

The Appeal
You have 14 calendar days after being informed of the outcome of your application to appeal against the decision.

Your line manager will arrange an appeal meeting, normally with an appeal panel of Headteachers, within 14 calendar days of receiving an appeal.

The Chair of the Appeals Committee will communicate the outcome of this appeal meeting to you within 14 calendar days of the meeting.

N.B. references to calendar days exclude Trust closure periods.

Right to be accompanied

Following a reasonable request, you have the right to be accompanied by a companion at any meeting that forms part of the procedure.

A companion may be a fellow worker, a trade union representative or an official employed by the trade union. The companion should be allowed to address the meeting to put and sum up your case, respond on your behalf to any views expressed at the meeting, ask questions of anyone present and privately confer with you before, during and following the meeting. The companion however does not have the right to answer questions on your behalf.

If your chosen companion is not available on the proposed date of the meeting the CEO should, within reason, postpone the meeting to allow you to bring along the chosen companion. Such a postponement should be granted twice. The alternative dates should normally follow within 14 calendar days of the original scheduled date.

Refusing an Application

An application can only be refused where there is a clear business reason. Your line manager must provide an explanation about why the business reason applies. This must also include key facts about why the business reason applies and why this is relevant to the Trust.
The reasons for refusing a request will be:

- extra costs that will damage the business
- the work cannot be reorganised among other staff
- people cannot be recruited to do the work
- flexible working will affect quality and performance
- the business will not be able to meet customer demand
- there's a lack of work to do during the proposed working times
- the business is planning changes to the workforce

Your line manager will contact the CEO and HR Consultant if they are intending to refuse a flexible working request.

Extension of time limits

Where the timescales need to be extended when managing a flexible working request, this should be done with the agreement of both parties. This may occur when the Trust wishes to investigate further before coming to a final decision. However, the decision must not be unduly delayed. The timescales detailed in this policy are particularly important if the employee has a statutory right to request to work flexibly, under the Employment Act 2002.

Other Considerations

Job Share **-** Job Sharing is a working arrangement in which two or more employees voluntarily share the duties and responsibilities of one post. The individual sharers receive pay and benefits in proportion to the number of hours they work. For teachers the division of hours will be expressed as a % of the 1265 hours directed time in accordance with paragraph 46.1 and 46.2 of the STPCD.

Where a contractual arrangement exists and a job sharer is absent from work for any period of time the remaining job share partner(s) may be asked but is not required to work the additional hours up to the full time equivalent.

Where a contractual arrangement exists and a job share partner leaves, Trusts should consider if it's appropriate to continue in a job share arrangement. Where there is no suitable job share partner and it is agreed that the post should be filled in another way then the incumbent job share partner should be offered this alternative work arrangement. If this is rejected then the individual may be subject to redeployment. Where redeployment is not successful this may result in their dismissal. Trusts should contact Human Resources where this situation arises.

Co- headship - Directors may wish to consider co-headship in response to a flexible working arrangement from a Headteacher, as part of a phased retirement or as part of their overall approach to succession planning.

Making a Request for Phased Retirement (TPS members) or Flexible Retirement (LGPS members) – Rather than continuing in a job to 65 or beyond, you may wish to consider the possibility of phased retirement (members of TPS) or flexible retirement (members of LGPS) where you manage the transition from employment to retirement. From age 55, if you reduce your hours or move to another position, and provided the Trust agrees, you can draw some or all of the pension benefits you have built up - helping you ease into retirement. The Trust must be able to demonstrate the business case for allowing phased or flexible retirement and the reduction must result in a reduction of the contributable salary of at least 20% if a TPS member and 40% if a LGPS member.

Right not to suffer any detriment
You are protected against detriment because of making a request for a flexible working arrangement.

Remuneration and Benefits

Pay Policy
Employees are subject to the Trust's Pay Policy. Salaries will be reviewed annually in accordance with the Pay Policy and will be based on performance against agreed objectives.

You should refer to the Trust's Pay Policy for specific information.

Payment of Salaries
Salaries will be paid monthly via credit transfer to your bank/building society on the last Wednesday of the month, except in December when early pay arrangements exist due to the Christmas break.

Mispayments
In the event of a mispayment resulting from inaccurate or outdated information supplied by the employee, the Trust is not held accountable for the error. The Trust will make reasonable efforts to help recover any funds sent to an incorrect account. If the mispaid funds can be successfully recovered, they will be reissued to the employee. However, if the funds cannot be recovered after reasonable attempts, the Trust will not issue a duplicate payment or refund the lost amount. Any delay or loss of funds resulting from an employee's failure to update their details is the sole responsibility of that employee.

Deductions from salary
The Trust has the right to make deductions from your salary in circumstances where there has been an overpayment of salary in excess of your contractual entitlement, or in the case of expenses the amount of reimbursement due.

Overpayment may occur for various reasons, such as, a mistake in applying a particular rate of pay, an administrative error, unplanned leave at short notice or failure to provide appropriate certification for sick leave. This is not an exhaustive list.

Deductions from salary may also be made in circumstances where money is owed to the Trust, for example if there is an outstanding balance owed for dinner money in excess of £25, if you leave employment before the end of a funding agreement for training, or if you do not attend training without reasonable grounds that incurs a cancellation fee or costs associated with rebooking.

You will be notified in advance when it is intended to make such deductions, and you will be invited to make any representations about the matter, including the frequency and amounts of the deductions. The overpayment will be deducted in the shortest reasonable timescale.

Overtime
Paid overtime must be agreed in advance with your line manager and will be paid at the normal hourly rate subject to National Conditions of Service. Overtime claims must be submitted each month and will be paid at the end of the following month.

Occupational Sick Pay
The Trust operates an Occupational Sick Pay scheme based on your nationally agreed terms and conditions of service and which are set out in your Written Statement of Employment Particulars.

Entitlement is based on a 12 month rolling programme from the first day of sickness and is subject to the length of service and the number of sickness absence days incurred in the year prior to the current absence.

The terms of payment of sick pay and employee responsibilities are explained the Trust's Sickness AbsencePolicy.

Maternity Pay
To be eligible to receive Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP) during Maternity Leave you must:

- be pregnant and have reached, or have given birth before reaching, the start of the 11th week before the expected week of childbirth;

- have been continuously employed for at least 26 weeks by the end of the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth;
- have average weekly earnings, for the 8 week period ending with the qualifying week, of not less than the Lower Earnings Limit;
- have stopped working for the Trust;
- have supplied your MATB1 before the birth of your child or no more than 3 weeks after;
- given 28 days' notice of when you wish your SMP to start.

Where you do not meet the criteria for SMP you may be entitled to a Maternity Allowance. Please see Gov.uk for more information on this.

Employees other than teachers

Employees other than teachers with less than one year's service

If you have less than one year's continuous service at the 11th week before your expected week of childbirth, you will be entitled to:

- 9/10ths of a week's pay for the first six weeks absence (SMP); **plus**
- 33 weeks' SMP. (SMP is paid at a fixed, flat rate, which is reviewed annually or 90% of average weekly earnings whichever is the lesser).

Once the above is exhausted, any Additional Maternity Leave to which you may be entitled is unpaid.

Employees other than teachers with at least one year's service

If you have at least one year's continuous service with the Trust at the 11th week before your expected week of childbirth you will be entitled to:

- 9/10 of a week's pay for the first six weeks' absence; **plus**

either:

- 12 weeks' half pay plus SMP followed by 21 weeks SMP;

or:

- 33 weeks' SMP if you do not intend to return to work.

Once the above is exhausted, any Additional Maternity Leave to which you may be entitled is unpaid.

Teaching Staff only

Teaching staff with less than one year's service:

If you have less than one year's continuous service as a teacher at the 11th week before your expected week of childbirth you will be entitled to:

- 9/10ths of a week's pay for the first six weeks absence (SMP); **plus**
- 33 weeks' SMP. (SMP is paid at a fixed, flat rate, which is reviewed annually or 90% of average weekly earnings whichever is the lesser).

Once the above is exhausted, any Additional Maternity Leave to which you may be entitled is unpaid.

Teaching Staff with at least one year's service

If you have at least one year's continuous service at the 11th week before your expected week of childbirth you will be entitled to:

- Full pay for the first 4 week's absence (this will be offset against any entitlement to SMP during this period); **plus**
- 9/10 of a week's pay for the next two weeks' absence (this will be offset against any entitlement to SMP during this period); **plus**

either:

- 12 weeks' half pay plus SMP followed by 21 weeks SMP;

or:

- 33 weeks' SMP if you do not intend to return to work.

Once the above is exhausted, any additional Maternity Leave to which you may be entitled is unpaid.

All employees

The 12 week's half pay plus SMP cannot exceed a normal week's pay and to be able to keep the Occupational Maternity Pay you must return to work for:

- 3 months after your maternity leave (for employees other than teachers);
- 13 weeks after your maternity leave (for teaching staff). This may include periods of school closure.

If you don't return to work, you must repay such proportion of the pay (but not the SMP) as determined by the Trust i.e. 12 weeks half pay for all employees.

If you start working for another employer during the SMP period after the baby is born, you must inform the Trust within 7 days of this and you will lose your entitlement to SMP. The Trust will continue to pay Occupational Maternity Pay unless otherwise stated and agreed in your Statement of Employment particulars or relevant policy.

Still Birth

If your pregnancy results in a still birth or termination before 24 weeks of pregnancy, you are not entitled to receive SMP, however, you may be entitled to sick pay if you satisfy the qualifying conditions. Please refer to the Managing Absence at Work Policy for further information on this.

If the pregnancy results in a still birth after 24 weeks you qualify for full maternity benefits and leave.

If you are not eligible for Statutory Maternity Pay

If you are not eligible for SMP but meet the eligibility requirements for Occupational Maternity Pay, i.e. you have at least one year's service at the 11th week before your expected week of childbirth, you will receive the Occupational Maternity Pay as follows:

Employees other than teachers:

- 6 weeks at 9/10ths of full pay;
- 12 weeks at half pay.

Teachers:

- 4 weeks at full pay;
- 2 weeks at 9/10ths of full pay;
- 12 weeks at half pay.

If you are not eligible for SMP, you may be able to claim Maternity Allowance direct from the DWP/Jobcentre Plus. You should contact these organisations direct.

Should you be entitled to Occupational Maternity Pay, any Maternity Allowance you receive will be offset against the Statutory Maternity Pay rate. If you do not qualify for Maternity Allowance, or it is paid at a lesser rate than the Statutory Maternity Pay, you will need to forward a copy of your Maternity Allowance statement to the Department of Working Pensions (DWP) or Job Centre Plus.

Paternity/Maternity Support Leave Pay

To qualify for paid Paternity/Maternity Support Leave you must be able to declare that:

- You are the baby's biological/adoptive parent; **or**
- You are married to or in a civil partnership with the mother or child's primary adopter in the case of adoption; **or**
- You are living with the mother in an enduring family relationship, but are not an immediate relative; **and**
- You will be responsible for the child's upbringing; **and**
- You will take time off work to support the mother/child's primary adopter or care for the child.

You must also:

- Have worked continuously for the Trust for at least 26 weeks leading into the 15th week before the baby is due, or in the case of adoption, at least 26 weeks by the week in which the adopter is notified that the child has been placed for adoption;

and

- Earn at least the Lower Earnings Limit (LEL) for National Insurance Contributions for the 8 week period ending with the qualifying week.

You will be asked to confirm in writing that you meet these conditions.

If you do not qualify, or are not eligible for Statutory Paternity Pay (SPP), or Maternity Support Pay (MSP), you may be able to receive an income support allowance direct from the DWP or Jobcentre Plus.

You will need to complete an SPP1 form and send directly to these organisations.

Amount of Paternity/Maternity Support Pay Due - (different conditions apply)

Subject to meeting the eligibility requirements as above, payment is based on your terms and conditions of employment:

For employees on NJC (Green book) terms and conditions:

- During week 1 you will be entitled to full pay (offset against any entitlement to SPP during this period);
- During week 2 you will be entitled to statutory Paternity/Maternity Support Pay paid at a fixed flat rate (or 90% of your average weekly earnings whichever is the greater);

For teachers only:

- You will be entitled to statutory Paternity/Maternity Support Pay paid at a fixed flat rate per week (or 90% of your average weekly earnings whichever is the greater) for one or two weeks.

Bereaved Partner's Paternity Leave Pay
Time off for bereaved partner's paternity leave is unpaid.

Adoption Pay
Statutory Adoption Pay is payable for 39 weeks from the first day of employment. It is paid at a fixed, flat rate, which is reviewed annually.

To qualify for Statutory Adoption Pay you must have average weekly earnings at or above the Lower Earnings Limit for National Insurance.

In either case you must be newly matched with a child for adoption by a UK* adoption agency. Adoption leave and pay will not apply in situations where the child is not newly matched for adoption (for example – where a step-parent adopts their partner's child).

* If adopting from abroad you must have received an official notification from the overseas Authority confirming that you have been assessed and approved as being a suitable adoptive parent.

Employees Other Than teachers – less than one year's continuous service
If you qualify for Statutory Adoption Pay but have less than one year's continuous service by the date on which you are notified of being matched with the child, you will be entitled to:
- 9/10ths (90%) of a week's pay for the first six weeks absence; **plus**
- 33 weeks' Statutory Adoption Pay. Statutory Adoption Pay is the same as Statutory Maternity Pay. It is paid at a fixed, flat rate, which is reviewed annually or 90% of average weekly earnings (whichever is the lesser).

Once the above payment has been exhausted, any Additional Adoption Leave to which you may be entitled is unpaid.

Employees Other Than teachers – at least one year's continuous service
If you qualify for Statutory Adoption Pay and have at least one year's continuous service by the date on which you are notified of being matched with the child, you will be entitled to:
- 9/10 of a week's pay for the first six weeks' absence; **plus**

either:
- 12 weeks' half pay plus Statutory Adoption Pay followed by 21 weeks Statutory Adoption Pay;

or:
- 33 weeks' Statutory Adoption Pay if you do not intend to return to work.

Once the above payment has been exhausted, any Additional Adoption Leave to which you may be entitled is unpaid.

Teaching Staff - less than one year's continuous service
If you qualify for Statutory Adoption Pay but have less than one year's continuous service by the date on which you are notified of being matched with the child, you will be entitled to:
- 9/10ths of a week's pay for the first six weeks absence; **plus**
- 33 weeks' Statutory Adoption Pay. (Statutory Adoption Pay is paid at a fixed, flat rate, which is reviewed annually or 90% of average weekly earnings whichever is the lesser).

Once the above payment has been exhausted any Additional Adoption Leave to which you may be entitled is unpaid.

Teaching Staff - at least one year's continuous service
If you qualify for Statutory Adoption Pay but have at least one year's continuous service by the date on which you are notified of being matched with the child, you will be entitled to:

- Full pay for the first four weeks' absence (this will be offset against any entitlement to Statutory Adoption Pay during this period); **plus**
- 9/10 of a week's pay for the next two weeks' absence; **plus**

either:

- 12 weeks' half pay plus Statutory Adoption Pay followed by 21 weeks Statutory Adoption Pay;

or:

- 33 weeks' Statutory Adoption Pay if you do not intend to return to work.

Once the above payment has been exhausted additional Adoption Leave to which you may be entitled is unpaid.

All employees
The 12 weeks' half pay plus Statutory Adoption Pay cannot exceed a normal week's pay, and to be able to keep the 12 week's half pay, you must return to work for:

- 3 months after your adoption leave (for employees other than teachers);

or:

- 13 weeks after your Adoption Leave if you do not intend to return to work. This may include periods of school closure.

Any Additional Adoption Leave to which you may be entitled is unpaid.

If you are not eligible for Statutory Adoption Pay
If you are not eligible for Statutory Adoption Pay but meet the eligibility requirements for Occupational Adoption Pay, you will receive the Occupational Adoption Pay as follows:

Employees other than teachers:

- 6 weeks at 9/10ths of full pay;
- 12 weeks at half pay.

Teachers:

- 4 weeks at full pay;
- 2 weeks at 9/10ths of full pay;
- 12 weeks at half pay.

Statutory Shared Parental Pay (ShPP)
Eligible employees may be entitled to take up to 37 weeks ShPP while taking SPL. The amount of weeks available will depend on the amount by which the mother/adopter reduces their Maternity/Adoption Pay period or Maternity Allowance period. ShPP may be payable during some or all of SPL, depending on the length and timing of the leave.

In addition to meeting the eligibility requirements for SPL, if you are seeking to claim ShPP, you must further satisfy each of the following criteria:

- the mother/adopter must be/have been entitled to Statutory Maternity/Adoption Pay or Maternity Allowance and must have curtailed their Maternity/Adoption Pay period or Maternity Allowance period;
- You must intend to care for the child during the week in which ShPP is payable;
- You must have an average weekly earnings for the period of 8 weeks leading up to and including the 15th week before the child's expected due date/matching date which are not less than the lower earnings limit in force for national insurance contributions;
- You must remain in continuous employment until the first week of ShPP has begun;
- You must give proper notification.

Where you are entitled to receive ShPP you must, at least 8 weeks before receiving any ShPP, give your line manager written notice advising of your entitlement to ShPP. To avoid duplication, if possible, this should be included as part of the Notice of Entitlement to take SPL.

In addition to what must be included in the Notice of Entitlement to take SPL, any notice that advises of an entitlement for ShPP must include:

- the start and end dates of any Maternity/Adoption Pay or Maternity Allowance;
- the total amount of ShPP available, the amount of ShPP you and your partner each intend to claim, and a non-binding indication of when you expect to claim ShPP;
- a signed declaration from you confirming that the information you have given is correct, that you meet, or will meet, the criteria for ShPP and that you will immediately inform the Trust should you cease to be eligible.

It must be accompanied by a signed declaration from your partner confirming:

- their agreement to you claiming ShPP and for the organisation to process any ShPP payments to you;
- in the case where the partner is the mother/ adopter that they have reduced their Maternity/Adoption Pay or Maternity Allowance and that they will immediately inform their partner should they cease to satisfy the eligibility conditions.

Any ShPP due will be paid at a rate set by the Government for the relevant tax year.

Parental Bereavement Leave Pay

Recognising the need to provide bereaved parents with support, we will continue to pay normal pay during the 2 weeks Parental Bereavement Leave.

Neonatal Leave Pay

Entitlement to Neonatal Care Leave Pay

You are entitled to Statutory Neonatal Care Pay during neonatal care leave if you:

- are eligible for statutory neonatal care leave
- have 26 weeks' continuous service by the week immediately preceding the one in which neonatal care starts
- earn at least the lower earnings limit on average calculated over the period of eight weeks ending with the week before neonatal care starts
- are still in employment in the week before neonatal care starts.

If you are eligible, you are entitled to a maximum of 12 weeks' Statutory Neonatal Care Pay, paid at one week per every seven uninterrupted days of care the child receives.

The weekly rate of Statutory Neonatal Care Pay is the lower of:

- the current statutory rate
- 90% of your normal weekly earnings.

If you are eligible for Statutory Neonatal Care Pay, you need to give us notice in writing of your intention to claim it alongside your notice of intention to take neonatal care leave.

Where you are claiming Statutory Neonatal Care Pay in the tier one period, you must provide notice before the end of 28 days after the first day of the pay week the notice refers to.

If you are claiming Statutory Neonatal Care Pay in the tier two period, you must provide notice no later than 15 days before the first day of the relevant pay week when taking a single week, or no later than 28 days before the first day of the first relevant pay week when taking two or more weeks.

The notice must include:

- your name
- the child's date of birth and date of placement if adoption
- the date(s) the child started receiving neonatal care
- the date neonatal care ended if the child is no longer receiving it
- the declaration that the week you are claiming pay for was taken to care for the child
- the declaration that you meet the eligibility requirements.

Childcare Voucher Scheme

Only employees of the Trust prior to 04th October 2018 may purchase childcare vouchers as part of a salary sacrifice scheme. This is where you have agreed to reduce your salary entitlement and receive childcare vouchers instead. This will not be classed as wages or salary and should therefore be provided on top of any Statutory Maternity / Adoption Pay or Occupational Maternity / Adoption Pay or ShPP payable. Neither Statutory Maternity / Adoption Pay or Occupational Maternity / Adoption Pay or ShPP should be reduced to take account of the fact that childcare vouchers are also being provided. It should be remembered that in the case of salary sacrifice arrangements the employee's Statutory Maternity / Adoption Pay or Occupational Maternity / Adoption Pay will already be based on the reduced pay.

Childcare vouchers must continue to be paid in any period during which you are in receipt of adoption pay. This cost will be met by the Trust.

Unfortunately, even if you had childcare vouchers with your last employer, we are unable to enrol anyone new in the scheme, as per Government guidelines.

New employees are able to apply for Tax Free Childcare, which is not administered by the Trust.

Expenses

Travel

You may be required to use your own car when travelling on school business. Any use of your own car on school business is subject to you:

- holding a full UK driving licence;
- ensuring that your car is roadworthy and fully registered;
- holding comprehensive motor insurance that provides for business use;
- completion of a voluntary driver declaration form.

Prior authorisation should be sought from the Business Manager before using your own car on school business. Copies of relevant documentation will be required.

The Trust accepts no liability for any accident, loss, damage or claim arising out of any journey that you make on school business. The Trust will not pay for the cost of any insurance policy on your own car. The mileage allowance paid includes an allowance to cover the cost of insurance, wear and tear, depreciation and the cost of the fuel used during the journey.

To claim for mileage expenditure you should set out the distance of the journey undertaken on your expenses claim form. If you are travelling from your home instead of your place of work, you must deduct the distance between your home and normal place of work. The Trust will pay you a mileage allowance as set out in the nationally agreed rates. Claims forms must be submitted within 3 months of travel. Claims submitted after 3 months of travel may be not be paid.

The Trust will pay for parking costs on production of a receipt. Toll charges will be reimbursed where the route has been approved in advance by your line manager. Routine use of the M6 Toll Road for travel within Staffordshire is not permitted.

The Trust is not responsible for any parking fines incurred whilst using your vehicle on Trust business.

You may claim for standard class rail fares only. Where possible, rail journeys should be booked well in advance to benefit from any discounts for early booking.

If you need any further information with regards to claiming travel or other expenses you should contact the Trust Finance Manager.

Other Expenses

Other expenses agreed in advance by your line manager can be claimed via Edupay. All claims must be made within 3 months of the date of the expense, and be accompanied by a valid receipt or invoice. Claims made later than 3 months may not be reimbursed.
Claims with no valid receipt or invoice will not be reimbursed.

Pensions
The Trust operates the Teachers' Pension Scheme for teaching staff and the Local Government Pension Scheme for non-teaching staff. No alternative pension provision is available.

Please be aware, as per the Privacy Notice, that your personal details are passed on to pension providers, and kept by them in line with their Privacy Notice, which can be obtained directly from them.

Pension Scheme during Maternity / Adoption / Shared Parental Leave
You are encouraged to seek advice on how Maternity / Adoption / Shared Parental Leave is likely to affect your pension rights in the long term or how to buy back service. Advice can be sought from:

- The Pensions Section for employees in the Local Government Pension Scheme; **or**
- The Teacher Pensions or relevant professional associations for employees in the Teacher's Pension Scheme.

Long Service Award
TSSMAT is keen to recognise and reward the loyalty and commitment of its staff.

Employees who have 25 years' service in the Trust or one of the Trust schools will be eligible for a long service award. Staff who have TUPE'd in from a joining school can count their continuous service from that school.

The award will be £150 in the form of gift vouchers for an appropriate retail outlet of the employee's choice, subject to Trust approval. Employees are not entitled to receive a cash equivalent. Under HC's current guidance, this is not a taxable benefit.

The Business Manager will notify the Headteacher and CEO of all employees that met the eligibility criteria within the previous academic year in the September of the next year, i.e. in September 2024 for those who met the criteria in between 01 September 23 - 31 August 24.

Once an award has been approved, the Headteacher and the employee will arrange the processing and presentation of the award. Awards will be presented within school, usually in December, but at the discretion of the Headteacher.

Health and Safety
The Trust is accountable for health and safety in all schools within the Trust, and responsibility for oversight sits with the Trust Finance Manager. Responsibility for health and safety on a day to day basis is delegated to the school Headteacher. However, everyone in the school has responsibilities in relation to health and safety. You are responsible for ensuring that your actions do not cause danger to yourself or to anyone else.

All appropriate training and equipment will be provided, however you are responsible for requesting information in relation to health and safety from your line manager and to become familiar with relevant safe working practices.

Compliance with current health and safety legislation is therefore regarded as the absolute minimum standard acceptable. You are expected and encouraged to be proactive on health and safety issues as part of the continued development of the health and safety culture of the school. All employees, contractors and sub-contractors are required to cooperate with the school in implementing the policy and shall ensure that their own work is without risks to themselves and others as far as reasonably practicable.

The school will provide appropriate training and make available competent health and safety advice and adequate resources, including time and money so that legal obligations may be met.

You should refer to your school's Health and Safety Policy for specific information. You should have read your school's Risk Assessments, which are updated annually, and are available in the school staff room. You must sign each year to show that you have read these.

Accidents and First-aid

By law, accidents, injuries and "dangerous occurrences" at work must be officially recorded. You are responsible for following appropriate reporting procedures. The accident books are held in the main School Office at each school. These must be filled in by the injured person, or on their behalf if this is not possible. All entries in the accident book must be referred to the Headteacher, or the Finance Manager as soon as possible, by the person making the entry.

The school will investigate all accidents and near misses to determine their underlying cause for the purpose of ensuring that there is no recurrence and using the lessons learnt to improve health and safety performance within the school.

You should refer to your school's Health and Safety Policy for specific information.

Signing In/Out -

You must sign in and out of all Trust buildings. Failure to do so will lead to the Trust recording that day as an absence.

Security

You have a duty of care to safeguard the property and equipment of the Trust. Security arrangements may vary between establishments and you must ensure that you familiarise yourself with arrangements where you are working. Any security arrangements must be strictly adhered to. Staff issued with a laptop, iPad, keys etc. should ensure that these are kept secure at all times.

All employees are responsible for ensuring the entry/exit codes to the buildings and the door entry codes to restricted areas remain confidential. You must ensure staff rooms and offices are locked when unattended where appropriate.

Alcohol and Drugs

You must not consume or be under the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol while on duty or on school premises. The school will take all reasonable steps to prevent a member of staff carrying out work-related activities if they are considered to be unfit/unsafe to undertake the work as a result of alcohol consumption or substance abuse.

The school expressly prohibits the use of any illegal drugs or any prescription drugs that have not been prescribed for the user. It is a criminal offence to be in possession of, use or distribute an illicit substance. If any such incidents take place on school premises, in school vehicles or at a school activity they will be regarded as serious and may lead to disciplinary action.

Alcohol may be consumed responsibly on the school premises when the Chief Executive Officer has given express permission, such as during an evening or weekend social function or a celebration event.

Smoking

Smoking of any substance, including vaping, is strictly prohibited on and around the school premises at all establishments. This includes entry and exit points.

Breast-feeding

The promotion of breast-feeding is a priority in the UK. Exclusive breast-feeding for the first six months of life offers major health advantages to mothers and babies, so it is important that mothers are enabled to continue breast-feeding when they return to work.

Health and safety legislation places a duty of care on employers to ensure that the breastfeeding child does not suffer any adverse effects as a result of their mother's work. If you wish to breast-feed upon returning to work, you should notify your manager as soon as practicable and discuss your personal requirements prior to your return to work.

Where practicable, managers will offer the following support:

- conduct a risk assessment of work activities, make adjustments as necessary and keep the assessment under review;
- organise appropriate work patterns/hours or paid breaks to ensure the required time is allocated for breast-feeding or expressing breast milk;
- find a room where milk can be expressed which will be (please note that these arrangements may not be within the individual's own workplace:
    - warm, clean and private;
    - suitable furniture;
    - hand-washing facilities (could be near-by);
    - storage facilities;
    - dedicated refrigerator (if possible).

Where it is not practicable to provide support at the workplace, time off with pay will always be provided to enable you to access the support that is required.

Menopause

The Trust aims to:

- Make sure that our schools can support staff affected by the menopause and help them to feel comfortable at work, both when experiencing symptoms and when asking for support and adjustments;
- Make reasonable adjustments to minimise the risk of the working environment making menopausal symptoms worse for those experiencing them;
- Minimise menopause-related stigma in our schools by educating staff on what it is and the symptoms that staff affected by it might suffer;
- Provide further resources to help staff to support others through difficulties the menopause may cause them.

Definitions

The **menopause** is a stage of life when a woman* stops having periods. It typically affects those aged between 45 and 55, when oestrogen (female sex hormones) levels begin to fall. In the UK, the average age to reach the menopause is 51.

Perimenopause is the time of hormonal change leading up to this, when a woman may experience symptoms. **Post menopause** is the time beyond menopause.

Early menopause is when a woman's periods stop before the age of 45. It can happen naturally or as a side effect of some treatments.

For the purpose of this policy, any reference to the menopause shall include perimenopause and early menopause.

*We acknowledge that while the majority of people affected by the menopause will be women, those who are trans or non-binary may also experience the menopause or menopause-type symptoms. The support outlined in this policy is designed to meet the above aims for all affected colleagues.

Symptoms
Individuals suffering from the menopause may experience symptoms that cause changes to their emotions and other aspects of their health, some of which may impact them at work.

Menopausal symptoms might include:
- Hot flushes, night sweats and palpitations;
- Difficulty sleeping, insomnia and fatigue;
- Low mood, anxiety and depression;
- Headaches and joint and muscle pain;
- Weakened bladder function and urinary tract infections;
- Vaginal dryness and reduced sex drive;
- Problems with memory, confidence and concentration.

For some individuals, being at work may make their symptoms worse. For example, if the temperature is too high, this may cause symptoms such as hot flushes, dizziness, discomfort, sweating and heart palpitations. Symptoms affecting sleep can make it difficult for staff experiencing them to concentrate and stay focused, while low confidence, low mood and anxiety may impact on decision-making and relationships with colleagues.

We acknowledge that the menopause will affect everybody differently – some individuals may experience no symptoms at all and some may experience a variety. We will adapt our response to staff affected by the menopause on a case-by-case basis.

Role of senior staff
Senior staff will make reasonable adjustments to the workplace to support staff experiencing the menopause, and to make sure the workplace doesn't make their symptoms worse, by:
- Carrying out individual risk assessments to assess working conditions in line with the specific needs of staff affected by the menopause;
- Monitoring the wellbeing of staff through regular structured conversations;
- Providing resources and training opportunities to make sure that all line managers are aware of the menopause, its potential impact on work, and what adjustments may be necessary;

- Promoting information about and access to external support services;
- Ensuring good ventilation and air quality throughout the school, leaving doors open where appropriate and ensuring windows can be safely opened;
- Ensuring regular access to cold drinking water for all staff;
- Regulating and monitoring the temperature of the school and collecting feedback from staff, as well as ensuring the temperature can be regulated per room by turning down radiators for example;
- Ensuring toilet, washing and sanitary facilities are accessible for staff, and establishing a system that allows for cover for staff to access these facilities where necessary while they are teaching;
- Providing blinds to windows.

Senior staff will work to create a culture in the school where staff can talk openly about the menopause by:

- Providing information on the menopause in the staff room, e.g. posters and leaflets;
- Providing training for staff and managers to achieve consistent practice;
- Referring to the menopause in the Trust's Staff Wellbeing Policy;
- Referring to menopause support offered through the Trust's insurance provider.

Role of line managers

Line managers who work with staff who may be affected by the menopause will:

- Provide a non-judgemental, empathetic and confidential support system to staff;
- Appreciate the personal nature of any conversations about the menopause and treat them confidentially and sensitively;
- Monitor sickness absence, and have support meetings with staff if any patterns emerge;
- Have regular, informal conversations with staff that they line manage who are affected by the menopause to discuss what support they need, and record any reasonable adjustments that are agreed;
- Consider flexible working requests in order to accommodate acute symptoms;
- Allow staff affected by the menopause to take regular breaks from their work if necessary to help manage symptoms;
- Give swift permission for absence to attend medical appointments;
- Promote information about and access to external support services;
- Record menopause-related absences as an 'ongoing health issue' instead of as an individual short-term absence to avoid triggering sickness absence procedures;
- Be sensitive to health issues such as the menopause during the performance management/appraisal process;
- If necessary, seek advice from HR or occupational health colleagues, or discuss a referral with the staff member to occupational health for further support.

Role of staff members affected by the menopause

We encourage staff who are experiencing menopausal symptoms that are impacting their health and wellbeing at work to:

- Share their practical needs to reduce the difficulties the menopause can cause and their preferred coping strategies with their line manager;
- Report honestly about their wellbeing and let their line manager or another trusted member of staff know if the menopause is having an impact on this;
- Make time in their schedule to visit their GP and other support services;
- Access SAS for further support.

School Policies and Procedures

This section does not form part of your contract of employment and may vary from time to time. You will be informed of any changes in writing. Copies of the Trust's Policies and Procedures can be found on the Trust's shared Policy drive, which is accessible to all staff, and on the Trust's website.

Staff Code of Conduct

The Trust expects all members of staff to follow our Code of Conduct, which sets clear guidance on the standards of behaviour required from our staff and volunteers. The guidance aims to encourage staff to meet the highest possible standards of conduct. Trust staff are in a position of trust and influence as role models for the children in their care, and as such must demonstrate behaviour that sets a good example to all.

You are an ambassador for the Trust and we expect you to conduct yourself professionally at all times. You should treat anyone attending the Trust schools or Care Clubs (children, parents/carers and visitors) courteously and with respect.

Swearing and abusive behaviour are not tolerated from anyone at the Trust, at any time. If any member of staff exhibits such behaviour they will be subject to the Trust's Disciplinary Procedures.

We expect you to value all the children as individuals, and in terms of behaviour to comply with the Trust's **Equal Opportunities Policy, Safeguarding Policy, Data Protection Policy, Employee Handbook** and all other Trust policies and procedures at all times.

You also have a responsibility to maintain your reputation and the reputation of the Trust, both during and outside of working hours.

Gross misconduct

You will be dismissed without notice if you are found to have committed an act of gross misconduct. Examples of gross misconduct include, but are not restricted to:

- Child abuse;
- Failing to comply with health and safety requirements;
- Physical violence;
- Ignoring a direct instruction given by a manager;
- Persistent bullying, sexual or racial harassment;
- Being unfit for work through alcohol or illegal drug use;
- Theft, fraud or falsification of documents;
- Committing a malicious or intended data breach;
- Being disqualified under the terms of the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (Section 75 of the Childcare Act 2006) or the Children's Act (1989).

The Headteacher will investigate the alleged incident thoroughly before any decision to dismiss is made. For full details see our Staff Disciplinary Policy.

Data Protection
The Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA) and the General Data Protection Regulations 2018 regulate the way in which certain information about employees is held and used. The Trust takes data protection very seriously and has instigated procedures to comply with the Acts.

Throughout employment and for as long a period as is necessary following the termination of employment, the Trust will need to keep information for purposes connected with your employment.

By entering into a contract of employment with The Staffordshire Schools Multi Academy Trust, you are consenting to the processing by the Trust or any associated company of personal data relating to you as necessary for the performance of your contract of employment and/or the conduct of Trust business. This explicitly includes the processing of any sensitive personal data relating to you, including any self-certificates, doctors' certificates, medical reports, details of trade union membership and details of criminal convictions as necessary for the performance of your contract and/or the conduct of Trust business. Details on how the Trust processes staff personal data is available in our Staff Privacy Notice, given to staff on appointment, and available on the website.

Should you wish to review documentation relating to your employment please contact the Trust Business Operations Manager in the first instance.

You should refer to the Trust's Data Protection Policy for specific information, as well as the Trust's Privacy Notice.

Reporting a breach if witnessed by you, or committed by you, is a mandatory part of employment within the Trust, as is fully engaging with any data breach investigations. Failing to do so may become a disciplinary issue.

Equal Opportunities
The Trust is committed to providing equal opportunities in employment and to avoiding unlawful discrimination in employment and against any member of the school community including recruitment, promotion, opportunities for training, pay and benefits, discipline and selection for redundancy.

The Trust will not discriminate unlawfully against third parties using or seeking to use goods, facilities or services provided by the school. You should report any bullying or harassment by a third party to the Headteacher, who will take appropriate action.

Every employee is required to assist the Trust to meet its commitment to provide equal opportunities in employment and avoid unlawful discrimination. You can be held personally liable as well as, or instead of, the Trust for any act of unlawful discrimination. Employees who commit serious acts of harassment may be guilty of a criminal offence.

Acts of discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation against employees or member of the school community are disciplinary offences and will be dealt with under the Trust's Disciplinary Policy. Discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation may constitute gross misconduct and could lead to dismissal without notice.

Please refer to the Trust's Equality Policy for specific information.

Safeguarding & Child Protection Procedures

The Trust recognises its duty to work with other agencies in protecting children from harm and responding to abuse. Staff who have significant concerns about any child, which may indicate physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse or neglect must report their concerns to the relevant school's Designated Safeguarding Lead via the procedures outlined in the Trust's Safeguarding Policies.

As a minimum, you must ensure you have read and understood the Trust's Safeguarding Policy and Procedures and Part One of Keeping Children Safe in Education.

Safeguarding concerns are logged on MyConcern, including low level concerns. See Safeguarding Policy for more information. The Safeguarding Policy complies with p25 paragraph 85 of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021.

Whistleblowing

Whistleblowing is where an employee raises concerns about underhand or illegal practices within the organisation. The Trust's policy is to operate within the country's laws and all employees are expected to co-operate in this by adhering to all laws, policies and procedures.

You should refer to the Trust's Whistleblowing Policy for specific information.

Confidentiality

No employee should disclose any confidential information, either while employed or after having left the employment of the Trust.

You will:

- maintain the strictest secrecy with regard to the affairs of Trust;
- refrain from revealing or using confidential information for any reason other than that which is necessary in the course of your duties, including using confidential information for personal gain;
- refrain from unauthorised use of computer equipment/devices as unauthorised use could result in damage to the equipment and loss of stored data;
- be familiar with the Trust's Data Protection procedures as a result of the GDPR Regulations 2018 and understand that the Trust is obliged as a consequence to view any breach of these procedures as a serious matter of discipline.

All employees must comply strictly with requirements in relation to confidentiality. Any breach of these requirements will be dealt with under the Trust's Disciplinary Policy and may constitute gross misconduct and could lead to dismissal without notice. You are required to sign the Confidentiality Agreement as part of your induction.

At The Trust, we respect the privacy of the children attending schools within the Trust, or the Care Club, and the privacy of their parents or carers. Our aim is to ensure that all those using and working at the Trust can do so with confidence.

We will respect confidentiality in the following ways:

- Parents can ask to see the records relating to their child, but will not have access to information about any other children;
- Staff only discuss individual children for purposes of planning and group management;
- Staff are made aware of the importance of confidentiality during their induction process;
- Information given by parents to staff will not be passed on to third parties without permission unless there is a safeguarding issue (as covered in our **Safeguarding Policy**);
- Concerns or evidence relating to a child's safety, will be kept in a confidential file and will only be shared with the Designated Safeguarding Lead and relevant staff on a need to know basis;
- Issues relating to the employment of staff, whether paid or voluntary, will remain confidential to those making personnel decisions;
- Confidential records are stored securely in a lockable file;
- Students on work placements and volunteers are informed of our confidentiality policy and are required to respect it.

Discipline

The Trust aims to ensure that there will be a fair and consistent approach to the enforcement of standards of conduct across all schools. All disciplinary matters will be dealt with in accordance with the Trust's Disciplinary Policy. The Disciplinary Policy is not contractual and may be subject to review, amendment or withdrawal.

You should refer to the Trust's Disciplinary Policy for specific information.

Grievance

It is the Trust's policy to ensure that employees encourage and maintain good employee relations, in order to ensure a motivated workforce and an efficient provision. Grievances will be dealt with fairly, speedily and close to the point of origin in accordance with the Trust's Grievance Policy. The Grievance Policy is not contractual and may be subject to review, amendment or withdrawal.

You should refer to the Trust's Grievance Policy for specific information.

Capability

The Trust takes a proactive approach to employee development and performance management. The Trust's Capability Policy aims to improve the performance of employees at work and issues of underperformance will be dealt with in accordance with this policy. The Trust's Capability Policy is not contractual and may be subject to review, amendment or withdrawal.

You should refer to the Trust's Capability Policy for specific information.

Performance Management

The purpose of performance management is to ensure that the standards of professional performance achieved by all staff are dealt with in a systematic and fair way.

The Trust is committed to supporting and retaining individuals who have the right motivation, skill and experience to make a positive contribution to the Trust's success and the delivery of high quality education.

The Trust is committed to achieving this through:

- setting high standards of expectation consistent with the school community, expectations of our Trust and relevant professional standards;
- the application of consistent and fair procedures in accordance with good practice and equal opportunities;
- adhering to relevant employment legislation and statutory guidance.

All colleagues including, temporary fixed term staff and casual staff, dependent upon length of service, will receive performance management. The Trust has a framework for a clear and consistent assessment of the overall performance of colleagues, and for supporting their development within the context of the Trust's plan for improving educational provision and performance to enhance pupil achievement, and the professional and organisational standards expected.

Performance management does not apply to teachers appointed on contracts of less than one term, those undergoing induction (i.e. ECTs) and those who are subject to capability procedures. The Performance Management Process will not be used as a substitute for informal programmes of support or counselling which should precede the initiation of a formal Capability Procedure.

Performance management in this Trust will be a supportive and developmental process designed to ensure that all colleagues have the skills and support they need to carry out their role effectively. It will help to ensure that all colleagues are able to continue to improve their performance and professional practice through high quality continuous professional development (CPD) and to develop their skills and practice further.

This procedure does not form part of your contract of employment and may be varied from time to time.

Appraisers

All appraisers of teachers other than Headteachers will have appropriate, relevant and current teaching experience, and will have Qualified Teacher Status (QTS). All appraisers will receive sufficient and appropriate training before undertaking the role. The appraiser should have an equivalent or greater level of responsibility than the colleague they are appraising, and normally have line management responsibility. The appraiser will conduct all aspects of the review, including pay recommendations of teachers who are eligible.

Where it becomes apparent that an appointed appraiser will be absent for the majority of the Performance Management cycle, the CEO may perform those duties or delegate those duties to another appraiser for the duration of the absence. Where possible, alternative appraisers will be offered to colleagues where there is a genuine and valid reason to appoint an alternative appraiser.

Directors

The CEO will be appraised by a panel of 3 from the Board of Directors.

The task of appraising the CEO, including the setting of objectives, will be delegated to a sub-group normally consisting of three members of the Board. Where a CEO is of the opinion that any of the Directors appointed by the Board are unsuitable to act as their appraiser, they may submit a written request for that Director to

be replaced, stating the reasons for the request. Where possible, alternative appraisers will be offered where there is a genuine and valid reason to appoint an alternative appraiser.

Colleagues (Teachers and Support Staff)

All staff have a responsibility to maintain high standards of performance. Staff are responsible for maintaining an appropriate level of skill and knowledge to fulfil their role and must reasonably engage in the training and support offered to ensure that professional and organisational standards are met.

The Trust will monitor the operation and outcomes of performance management arrangements and the CEO will provide the Board with a written report on the operation of performance management annually. The report will avoid, where possible, the identification of any individual whose performance is appraised under this policy.

The report will include:

- the operation of performance management within the Trust;
- the effectiveness of the Trust's performance management procedures;
- staff training and development needs.

Links with other policies

Grievance Policy – In exceptional circumstances, a colleague may raise a grievance about the CEO or manager in relation to the application of the Performance Management Policy. In these circumstances, the matter should be investigated in accordance with the Trust's Grievance Policy.

Depending on the circumstances, it may be appropriate to suspend the procedure until the grievance can be considered. Such a delay should only be considered where there is a strong indication that the colleague has been mistreated and consideration should be given to bringing in another manager to deal with the performance management cycle. Any records should be passed to the new manager and, if appropriate, the performance management cycle should be continued within the same timetable.

Sickness Absence Policy **-** Absence which is triggered by the Performance Management Policy, and which management believe is likely to be long term, should be referred immediately to the occupational health adviser to assess the colleague's fitness for work and what support can be offered.

The Performance Management Process may need to be adjusted if long term sickness absence or maternity leave affects the achievement or progress towards the performance management objectives, and in such cases a review will take place.

Capability Policy– Managers will not rely solely on the Performance Management Process as a trigger to consider implementation of the Capability Policy. The Trust will take account of a wider knowledge of the quality of performance and the Performance Management Process will inform that wider knowledge. The Trust recognises that poor performance issues can arise for a variety of reasons, including being triggered by work related and non-work-related factors. Once a decision has been made to proceed to capability procedures, the Performance Management Process will be suspended.

Before embarking on a formal capability procedure, the appropriate manager will be able to evidence that appropriate support through the Performance Management Process has been exhausted and has failed to

achieve the required improvements. Where it is necessary to begin the capability procedure a formal meeting will be held with the colleague to bring the Performance Management Process to an end and to give notice of the initiation of the Capability Procedure.

Performance management and capability processes will be kept separate.

The Performance Management Period

The performance management period for all staff will run for twelve months, normally from 1 September to 31 August.

Staff who are employed on a fixed term contract of less than one year will have their performance managed in accordance with the principles underpinning this policy. The length of the period will be determined by the duration of their contract.

There is flexibility to have a longer or shorter performance management period when colleagues begin or end employment part way through a performance management cycle.

Performance will be formally assessed in respect of each performance management period at the end of the annual Performance Management Process, however, performance and development priorities may be reviewed at an interim meeting part way through the performance management cycle.

The whole process will have regard to what can be reasonably expected of any colleague in that position being able to achieve a satisfactory balance between the time required to discharge their professional duties and the time required to pursue their personal interests outside work. Priorities or objectives may need to be reviewed if circumstances or responsibilities change. In such cases amendments will be agreed with you and confirmed in writing.

You will receive a written Performance Management Report, as soon as practicable following the end of each performance management period and you will have the opportunity to comment in writing on the Report.

In this Trust, support staff, teachers, Headteachers and the CEO will receive their written Performance Management Reports by 31 October.

The Performance Management Report will include:

- details of the objectives for the Performance Management period in question;
- an assessment of performance of role and responsibilities against objectives and the relevant standards;
- an assessment of the training and development needs and identification of any action that should be taken to address them;
- a recommendation on pay where that is relevant*;*
- the appraisee's own comments.

Consideration of any pay recommendations will be made in accordance with the Trust's Pay Policy and the colleague's terms and conditions of employment.

The assessment of performance and of training and development needs will inform the planning process for the following performance management period.

Setting Objectives

Objectives set will be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound, and will be appropriate to your role and level of experience. Common objectives may be agreed to support school development plans.

Your objectives will be set before, or as soon as possible after, the start of each performance management period. This will be quality assured by the CEO.

The CEO's objectives will be set by the Board after consultation with the CEO.

Your appraiser will seek to agree your objectives with you, but where a joint determination cannot be made the appraiser will make the determination. You may request moderation and should this be unsuccessful then you will be given the opportunity to append comments alongside your objectives. Objectives may be revised by agreement if circumstances change.

The objectives set will, if achieved, contribute to the Trust's plans for improving the school's educational provision and performance, and improving the education of pupils, taking into account the professional aspirations of staff. You will not normally be given more than three objectives. Setting more than three objectives can cause increased workload and be inconsistent with the Trust's Wellbeing strategy.

Before, or as soon as possible after the start of each performance management period, you will be informed of the standards against which your performance in that performance management period will be assessed.

Teachers' Standards provide the context in which, through professional discussions, objectives are set, CPD needs identified, success criteria defined and the nature and extent of any required observations planned. The Teachers' Standards should not be used as a checklist but should inform the setting of targets.

The agreed objectives will contain a description of what success may look like. Where use of numerical targets is appropriate, these will be reasonable in the circumstances and consideration will be given to factors outside your control which may significantly affect success.

Your appraiser will take into account the effects of your circumstances, including any disability, when agreeing objectives. For example, this might include a reasonable adjustment to allow an individual slightly longer to complete a task than might otherwise be the case. When staff return from a period of extended absence objectives may be adjusted to allow them to readjust to their working environment.

Reviewing performance

Observation

As appropriate, observation of classroom practice and other responsibilities is important both as a way of assessing performance in order to identify any particular strengths and areas for development and of gaining useful information which can inform school improvement more generally. All observations will be carried out in a supportive manner.

The amount and type of observation will depend on the individual circumstances and the overall needs of the Trust.

Teachers
The total period for classroom observation arranged for performance management purposes for any teacher will not normally exceed three hours per cycle, having regard to the individual circumstances of the teacher. There is no requirement to use all of the three hours. The amount of observation will reflect, and be proportionate to, the needs of the individual. Classroom observation of teachers will be carried out by those with QTS. All colleagues, including teachers and Headteachers, who have responsibilities outside the classroom should also expect to have their performance of those responsibilities observed and assessed.

In the more general monitoring and evaluating of teaching standards concerns may be identified. Any concerns that may arise should be discussed with the teacher.

Verbal feedback will be given promptly following any observation and written feedback will be provided within 10 working days by the person who has undertaken the observation.

Support Staff
As appropriate, observation of professional duties and other responsibilities, including reviewing work evidence, is important both as a way of assessing performance in order to identify any particular strengths and areas for development and of gaining useful information which can inform school improvement more generally.

Feedback
Colleagues will receive constructive feedback on their progress towards the achievement of their performance management objectives throughout the performance management cycle e.g. following observation or review of work evidence. Feedback will be given in a supportive context highlighting particular areas of strength as well as any areas that need additional support in order to successfully meet their performance management objectives. A written record on progress made should be kept detailing the date and key issues of any feedback and should form part of the performance management documentation. Should either the appraiser or appraisee identify issues of concern, an interim meeting may be called to discuss any support that is necessary to address the concerns.

Appeals
At any point in the Performance Management Process, you have a right of appeal in respect of the application of the policy. The grounds for the appeal will determine the relevant appeal process to be used, for example, an appeal may need to be considered under the Trust's Pay Policy.

If you wish to appeal, you must notify the CEO in writing of your intention to appeal a decision made, including your grounds of appeal. The CEO will confirm the relevant policy and procedure for the appeal which will set out the process and relevant timescales.

The appeal will take place within 10 working days of notification of appeal.

Data Protection
All written performance management records will be retained in a secure place for six years and then destroyed. You should retain your own copy for the same period.

All staff will have access to documentation relating to school improvement and any other documents and procedures to which this policy relates.

Minutes of formal meetings will be given to you for information and copies of notes, letters and action plans should be retained on file.

Anti-Harassment & Bullying Policy

If you feel you are being treated unfairly at work, it is important to understand what type of treatment you are experiencing. It might be bullying, harassment, or victimisation.

This policy explains these terms, what you can do and what you can expect to happen if you are experiencing or observing any of these behaviours.

The aim of this policy is to achieve an improvement in your working environment and working relationships so that it is free from harassment, bullying, victimisation and discrimination.

If you raise a complaint under this policy whilst another process is active, e.g., during a capability or disciplinary process, then there may be a decision to pause or in most cases where they are directly connected, they will run at the same time. This policy will not to be used for:

- Personal differences between you and another employee.
- Incidents that happened more than 3 months ago. There may be some exceptions to this timescale dependent on the nature of the complaint. We reserve the right not to investigate complaints older than 3 months.

If a malicious or vexatious complaint is made against you or you make such a complaint, this may be treated as misconduct and lead to disciplinary action.

Scope

The purpose of this policy is to set out a framework for managers to deal with any harassment or bullying by any members of staff (which may include consultants, contractors and agency workers) and also by third parties such as customers, suppliers or visitors to our premises.

This policy has been implemented following consultation with our recognised Trade Unions.

This policy does not form part of any contract of employment or contract to provide services, and we may amend it at any time in consultation with recognised trade unions.

This policy applies to all employees, officers, consultants, self-employed contractors, casual workers, agency workers, volunteers, and interns.

Decisions will be made in line with the school's local scheme of delegation or equivalent mechanism for making decisions at the appropriate level.

What is bullying?

Bullying can be described as unwanted behaviour (one off or a regular pattern) from a person or group that can be offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting, an abuse or misuse of power that can make a person feel vulnerable, upset, humiliated, undermined, or threatened. Power does not always mean being in a position of authority but can include both personal strength and the power to coerce through fear or intimidation. It can happen at work or in other work-related events and not always face to face, for example, over email or on social media. Bullying may not always be obvious or noticed by others.

Examples of bullying can include:

- spreading malicious rumours, or insulting someone by word or behaviour
- copying emails that are critical about someone to others who do not need to know
- ridiculing or demeaning someone – picking on them or setting them up to fail
- exclusion or victimisation
- unfair treatment
- overbearing supervision or other misuse of power or position (however, legitimate, reasonable and constructive criticism of a worker's performance or behaviour, or reasonable instructions given to workers in the course of their employment, will not amount to bullying on their own)
- unwelcome sexual advances – touching, standing too close, verbal communication, display of offensive materials
- making threats or comments about job security without foundation
- deliberately undermining a competent worker with unreasonable workloads or constant criticism
- preventing an individual's progression by intentionally blocking promotion or learning or development opportunities

What is harassment?

Harassment is any unwanted conduct that has the purpose or effect of either violating a person's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment for them. This behaviour may involve conduct of a sexual nature, or it could relate to one or more protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 (such as race, gender, age, sexual orientation, or disability).

Sexual Harassment: This involves conduct of a sexual nature and can be categorized into four main types:

- Non-verbal conduct: Examples include offensive gestures, staring or leering, sexually explicit materials (such as pin-ups or calendars), computer pornography, or unsolicited, unwanted gifts.
- Verbal conduct: Examples include suggestive or explicit language (including via email or social media), unwanted propositions, sexually explicit jokes, 'pet' names, invasive comments or questions, cat calls, whistling, or patronising and derogatory remarks.
- Physical conduct: Examples include deliberate body contact (such as brushing, pinching, or touching), indecent exposure, groping, fondling, or sexual assault.
- Image-based sexual abuse: This includes the non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes, as well as actions covered by terms like 'revenge porn' and 'upskirting'.

Online Bullying and Harassment: This refers to targeted abuse through technology and digital channels, which includes:

- Sending threatening or abusive text messages or emails.
- Creating and sharing embarrassing or explicit images or videos.
- Trolling, which is the sending of menacing or upsetting messages on social networks, in chat rooms, or during online games.
- Shaming someone online.
- Setting up hate sites or groups, including social media chat groups.
- Voting for or against someone in an abusive poll.
- Creating fake accounts.

- Creating deepfake videos or images.
    - Hijacking, impersonating, or stealing a person's online identity to embarrass or cause trouble using their name.

To be considered harassment the unwanted behaviour must have either violated your dignity, or created an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for you, whether intended or not.

Harassment can include a serious one-off incident, repeated behaviours, spoken or written words, imagery, gestures, mimicry, jokes or physical behaviours that affect you. A key factor in determining whether bullying / harassment has occurred is whether the actions or comments are viewed as demeaning and unacceptable by you.

Cases of harassment can often relate to 'banter'. Banter is defined as friendly teasing. Banter cannot be used to excuse derogatory or discriminatory language or behaviour related to a protected characteristic which falls within the bounds of unwanted behaviour and is therefore harassment.
The law on harassment also applies to:

- being harassed because you are thought to have a certain protected characteristic when you do not
- because you are linked to someone with a certain protected characteristic
- you witness harassment that violates your dignity or has created an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive working environment for you, even if you were not the intended "target"
- being treated less favourably because you have unwillingly allowed (or submitted/given in) or refused to allow (or submit/given in) to behaviour amounting to sexual harassment against you in the past.

What is victimisation?
Victimisation is being treated unfairly because you made or supported a complaint to do with a protected characteristic or someone believes that you did.

What is discrimination?
By law, discrimination is when someone is treated unfairly because of any protected characteristics as outlined above. It is against the law to treat someone unfairly because of any of them, except in very rare circumstances. For example, if someone is turned down for a job because of their sexual orientation it is likely to be discrimination.

Forms of Unacceptable Workplace Behaviour
The following non-exhaustive list details types of intimidation and harassment that will not be tolerated within the Trust:

- Offensive Behaviour: Repeatedly shouting or swearing at staff in public or private; spreading malicious rumours or prejudiced myths; insulting or using derogatory language, nicknames, or banter; and asking intrusive questions or making unwanted insinuations.
- Visual/Gestural Offence: Use of unwelcome or offensive imagery, graffiti, gestures, facial expressions, staring, mimicry, jokes, or pranks, as well as ridiculing or demeaning someone.
- Discriminatory Language: Racist, sexist, homophobic, ageist, or disablist jokes, banter, insinuations, or insults.
- Targeted Harassment: Taunting, picking on someone, setting them up to fail, or making assumptions about competence and treating them as inferior.

- Exclusion and Isolation: Refusing to work with someone; exclusion, isolation, ignoring, or shunning; or unfairly excluding someone associated with the employee.
- Obstruction and Undermining: Making tasks unnecessarily difficult; undermining a competent worker through overload or persistent criticism; unfair work allocation; blocking promotion or training; or overbearing supervision.
- Coercion and Threats: Unwanted pressure or intimidation, as well as threats or comments about job security without foundation.
- LGB Discrimination: Outing someone without consent or making assumptions about what is 'normal'.
- Invasive Behaviour: Intrusive questioning about personal or sex life, or victimisation for refusing to accept or collude with bullying or harassment.
- Physical Misconduct: Invasion of personal space, unnecessary touching, and physical abuse, attacks, or violence.

Mediation

We strongly promote the use of mediation services as an option for resolving concerns within the workplace. Access to such a service can be identified through normal day-to-day management conversations. This remains an option during any formal process.

The benefits of mediation are that it can help with situations where two or more people are in dispute about something and or are experiencing relationship difficulties and are keen to reach an agreement. It is a voluntary process, and a trained Mediator will help to facilitate discussions about solutions. They are not there to judge, decide or tell you what you should do. It can often be a useful approach to help resolve a problem.

If at any point you feel that mediation might help, you should discuss this with your manager, Head Teacher, Chair of Governors (where concerns relate to the Head Teacher) or HR Provider.

Early considerations

Sometimes there will be issues within the workplace that may not require a formal process and you feel able to raise and discuss during everyday work conversations. We recognise that sometimes issues may arise because of misunderstandings or miscommunication.

It is also important to recognise that upwards bullying or harassment can occur.

It can be difficult if you are in a more senior role to realise you are experiencing bullying behaviour by someone in your team. This could include someone showing continued disrespect, refusing to complete tasks, spreading rumours, doing things to make you seem unskilled or unable to do your job properly.

Regardless of whether it occurs on a peer-to-peer basis or within a line management relationship, it is important to consider any underlying reasons for the behaviour and engage in early conversations to achieve resolution as quickly as possible.

Sometimes the person(s) alleged to have displayed bullying behaviour (the person under investigation), might not realise the effect of their actions upon you or others. If you can, you should always try and talk to them first. You should explain how their behaviour makes you feel, be firm but not aggressive and stick to the facts.

If you do not feel comfortable talking to the person face to face, you should consider:

- Writing to them perhaps with support from a trade union representative if you have one.
- Talking with someone at work you feel comfortable with. This could be:-
    - your manager,
    - another manager,
    - the Head Teacher,
    - Chair of Governors who you can confide in
    - a Trade Union Representative
    - a family member or initially through a counsellor if you are accessing counselling support from them
- Keeping a diary or a record of bullying
    - how it made you feel
    - any witnesses
    - dates and times
    - emails or social media posts that may be required as evidence.

We recognise that behaviours associated with bullying and harassment can often take place in private and out of the sight of others. Where there are no witnesses, you may feel that there is little point in raising a complaint as you will have no evidence, may not be believed or a complaint may make matters worse. Even in these circumstances, we would encourage you to talk to someone as soon as possible so that we can support you and work towards resolution of the issue as quickly as possible.
We will ensure that if you are raising a complaint or are involved in an investigation, you feel fully supported and protected before, during and after any process.

Complaints about third parties

You might raise issues about matters that are considered to be outside of our control as your employer, for example, issues relating to customer or client relationships.
We will not tolerate bullying or harassment by any contractor, visitor or member of the public. Where this happens, we will adhere to the process outlined in this policy as far as is reasonably practicable and take steps to prevent it from happening again. This may include warning a customer or reporting any criminal acts to the policy. It is essential that you raise this with your manager.

Collective complaints

When someone raises a complaint under this policy with other colleagues, this will be referred to as a collective complaint and this will follow the same process as outlined in this policy. It may be helpful to have 1 or 2 representatives from the group, with the same grievances, to participate in the process on behalf of the others. Alternatively, a trade union representative may act on behalf of a group of their members.

Handling, Investigating, and Recording Incidents

- Reporting & Recording: All incidents of bullying or harassment must be appropriately recorded in line with the Trust's established HR, behaviour, and safeguarding procedures.
- Grievances: All grievances relating to bullying or harassment will be taken seriously, investigated promptly, and treated sensitively and confidentially.
- Resolution Routes: The Trust will investigate and progress matters using both informal routes (such as speaking to the alleged perpetrator, meetings, or arranging mediation) and formal routes (primarily

following the school's formal grievance procedure). Appropriate support mechanisms will be implemented for the person reporting the incident, following the school's policies.

Formal Complaints of Harassment and Bullying

Where resolution cannot be reached, or the matter is so serious, a full formal investigation may be required. If you wish to proceed with a formal complaint you will need to:

- Set out your complaint in writing to your manager. This should include as much detail as you can of events, dates, and the impact.
- Try and use language that is factual and try to avoid language that might cause additional distress (if you find this difficult to express you can seek support from your manager, or your Trade Union).
- Identify any potential witnesses.
- Raise and submit your complaint within 3 months of the concern, problem or complaint arising. We reserve the right not to investigate complaints older than 3 months. There may be some exceptions to this timescale dependent on the nature of the issue. For example, where a number of instances occur over a number of months, they may be considered. Conversely, an isolated incident or issue that occurred many months or years ago may not be.
- Be clear about how you feel your complaint can be resolved satisfactorily.

If your complaint relates to your direct line manager then you should submit this to a more senior manager, Head Teacher or Chair of Governors (where it relates to your Head Teacher). If you are unsure who to submit your complaint to, you can speak to the Business Manager.

We may also consider that despite there being no formal complaint submitted, that behaviours we become aware of or have been observed, are so serious that we feel a formal process needs to be followed. In those circumstances, we will notify all parties in writing and explain why we feel this is necessary.

Additionally, we reserve the right to invoke and apply the principles of the Disciplinary Policy, to any allegation of harassment, bullying, victimisation or discrimination. This decision will be taken by the manager in receipt of the complaint and /or concern and will be supported by the Business Manager and HR provider as appropriate.

Once you have submitted your formal complaint in writing, the manager, Head Teacher or Chair of Governors to whom you have addressed it (known as the Deciding Manager), will acknowledge it in writing and arrange to meet with you to discuss and understand your complaint more fully. They will attempt to do this within 5 working days of receiving your written complaint and you will have a right to be accompanied.

Where it is not possible to hold a face-to-face meeting under this procedure, we may conduct the process remotely, for example using Google Meet. We will ensure that you and your companion have access to the necessary technology for participating. Your rights will not be affected, and we will ensure that the procedure remains fair and reasonable.

It might be possible to reach agreement during that meeting for an approach to a trained Mediator to try and resolve your complaint without immediately entering into formal investigation. You may also be able to agree meeting with or sharing how you feel with the person the complaint is about, with support, particularly if that person(s) is unaware of how their behaviours may be affecting you.

However, where a formal investigation is required, the Deciding Manager will write to you to inform you who they will be appointing to investigate your complaint (Investigating Officer), how long the investigation is likely to take and that you and other parties who may be witnesses will be asked to meet with them and provide statements to establish the facts.

You should be aware that once a formal investigation has been agreed, the Deciding Manager will also then need to meet with the person under investigation to explain that a complaint of harassment, bullying, or victimisation has been made against them and explain what process will follow.

If a complaint is made against you, you can expect to receive details of the complaint in writing. You will also have the right of response through the investigation process with the right to be accompanied.

Following completion of the investigation, a report will be completed with details of findings, and you will be invited to make final representations at an outcome meeting. Consideration will then be given as to whether:-

- the matter should proceed to a formal hearing under the Disciplinary Policy
- there is some other option for resolution
- there is no case to answer

Should the matter proceed to a disciplinary process, the investigation report will form the basis of that process.

Whether you are the complainant or the person the complaint is about, you will be kept updated if timescales need to be extended, particularly where issues within an investigation are complex. It may be possible for both parties to remain working in the same team or location whilst an investigation takes place, however this can be discussed with the Deciding Manager prior to commencement of the investigation to ensure all parties feel fully supported and identify if there are any measures that would assist during the investigation. We may consider suspending the person under investigation (on full pay) or making other temporary changes to working arrangements pending the outcome of the investigation, if circumstances require. For example, you may ask for changes to your duties or working hours to avoid or minimise contact with the person the complaint is about.

Where your complaint is about someone other than an employee, such as a customer, supplier, or visitor, we will consider what action may be appropriate to protect you and anyone involved pending the outcome of the investigation, bearing in mind the reasonable needs of the business and the rights of that person. Where appropriate, we will attempt to discuss the matter with the third party.

It may be necessary to interview witnesses to any of the incidents mentioned in your complaint. If so, the importance of confidentiality will be emphasised to them.

If you have difficulty at any stage of this procedure either:

- because of a disability or
- because English is not your first language

you should discuss the situation with your manager as soon as possible, so that suitable support can be explored.

Formal Outcome Meeting

Once the Investigating Officer has concluded their investigation, they will submit their findings to the manager who requested the investigation (the Deciding Manager). They will then send a copy of the report to both complainant and the person under investigation and arrange to meet to discuss the findings. There will be separate outcome meetings with you as complainant and the person under investigation. You will both be given a minimum of 10 calendar days' notice of the meeting taking place, unless you request to meet sooner. The HR Provider will also be in attendance, wherever possible.

A record of the meeting will be made, either by the person conducting the meeting, a note taker or electronic recording (where the meeting is held remotely). Where electronic recordings are made, for the purposes of transcription, this will be with prior consent by all attendees and data protection obligations being met. A written record or transcription of the meeting will be shared with you.

You both have the right to be accompanied at this meeting and must take all reasonable steps to attend a meeting. If you or your companion are unable to attend a formal meeting, you have a right to suggest an alternative time and date so long as it is reasonable, and it is not more than 5 working days after the original date.

You are expected to attend meetings which form a key part of processes in relation to your employment. Meetings will be rearranged where possible however not usually more than once.

If you are unable to, or fail to, attend a rearranged meeting, without good reason, the meeting may be held in your absence. Where you have indicated, in advance, that you are unable to attend you may be invited to submit written representation (to arrive at least 24 hours before the meeting).

Where a decision is made in your absence it will be based upon the information available at the time, including any written representations you have made.

At the separate outcome meetings, you will both have opportunity to make any final "representations" in relation to the findings. This is a provision for both the complainant and the person under investigation to submit any additional comments to the Deciding Manager for them to take into consideration alongside the findings. This is not to add more evidence as you should ensure all detail has been shared throughout the investigation but provides an opportunity having read the final report to correct or highlight anything that you feel is of specific importance and/or may have been missed as part of that investigation report. You will have 5 working days from the date of the meeting to submit any final "representations" to the Deciding Manager in writing.

Following the meeting, and period allowed for final representations, the Deciding Manager will inform you of the outcome at the earliest opportunity and in writing within five working days. If they are unable to make a decision at that point, they will contact you and explain why and when they will be able to confirm the decision and what the next steps are.

Potential outcomes will be that your complaint is: -

- Upheld – if the Deciding Manager considers that harassment or bullying has occurred, then prompt action will be taken to address it. Where the harasser or bully is a member of staff, the matter will be dealt with as a case of possible misconduct or gross misconduct under our Disciplinary Policy. If the

harasser or bully is a third party such as a customer or other visitor, we will consider what action would be appropriate to deal with the problem.

- Partially Upheld – this may be a combination of disciplinary action and/or recommendations for specific actions such as mediation
- Not Upheld – there is insufficient evidence to warrant a disciplinary process but there may be other actions that are required to help facilitate better working relationships

Whether or not your complaint is upheld, we will consider how best to manage any ongoing working relationship between you and the person concerned. It may be appropriate to arrange some form of mediation and/or counselling, or to change the duties, working location or reporting lines of one or both parties.

The Deciding Manager will include as much detail as possible to support the rationale for the outcome provided. If you are the person under investigation and the outcome is upheld which indicates a formal disciplinary hearing is required, you will have a right of appeal through the disciplinary process. If you as the complainant are dissatisfied with the outcome provided by the Deciding Manager under this policy, you have the right of appeal under the Appeals Procedure.

Any staff member who deliberately provides false information or otherwise acts in bad faith as part of an investigation may be subject to action under our Disciplinary Policy.

Formal Disciplinary Hearing

Where the findings of a formal investigation produce evidence of bullying or harassment and the Deciding Manager confirms a formal disciplinary hearing is required, the process will then move to the Formal Disciplinary hearing process. The case will be heard by a Deciding Manager who has not previously been involved and will follow the process for a hearing as outlined in the Disciplinary Policy. The option of a "Colleague Proposed Approach" through the disciplinary policy will not be available for allegations of harassment, bullying or victimisation.

Wellbeing, Support and Protection for those involved

Supporting wellbeing is an integral and essential part of our values. Concerns around bullying, harassment or victimisation particularly where a formal investigation is needed, can be stressful for everyone involved. We all respond to stressful situations in different ways. Sometimes a process may cause distress and impact on both physical and mental health.

The Trust has access to a number of services through it's insurance policies, for more information on any of these and how they may support you, please speak to your manager.

If you make a complaint or participate in good faith in any investigation you will not suffer any form of retaliation or victimisation as a result. Anyone found to have retaliated against or victimised someone in this way will be subject to disciplinary action under our Disciplinary Policy. If the matter is not resolved, you should raise it formally using our Resolving Grievances Policy or this procedure if appropriate.

If you believe you have suffered any such treatment you should inform your line manager. If your line manager is the concern, you should contact your senior manager, Head Teacher or Chair of Governors.

Right to be Accompanied

In line with ACAS (Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service) Code of Practice, at any formal meeting you have the right to be accompanied by either:

- a work colleague
- a trade union representative, or
- an official employed by the trade union

You should confirm to the Deciding Manager who will accompany you in advance of any meeting.
There are also times when we allow you to be accompanied at other meetings as part of this policy and it will be noted at the relevant sections where this is permitted.

At the meeting, your companion may make representations to us and ask questions but should not answer questions on your behalf. You may talk privately with them at any time during the meeting.

Acting as a companion is voluntary and your colleagues are under no obligation to do so. If they agree to do so they will be allowed reasonable time off from duties without loss of pay to act as a companion.
We may, at our discretion, allow you to bring a companion who is not a colleague or union representative (for example, a member of your family) if this will help overcome a disability, or if you have difficulty understanding English.

Whistleblowing

Raising a complaint can often be confused with "whistleblowing". You are a whistle-blower if you report types of wrongdoing, usually something you have seen at work which is in the public interest. This means that it must affect others for example the general public. In those cases, you are protected by law and can raise a concern at any time and should use the Whistleblowing procedure which can be found on the Policies drive, or from your manager.

If your complaint is not something that would affect the general public but about alleged bullying or harassing behaviours by someone else towards you, then this is likely to be a complaint under this policy and this process should be followed.

Data Protection and Confidentiality

Confidentiality is an important part of the procedures provided under this policy. Details of the investigation and the names of the person making the complaint and the person the complaint is about must only be disclosed on a "need to know" basis. Breach of confidentiality may give rise to disciplinary action under our Disciplinary Policy.

If you are invited to a formal meeting, you must not make any electronic recordings. Any breach of this provision may lead to disciplinary action, which could include dismissal.

Information about a complaint by or about you may be placed on your personnel file, along with a record of the outcome and of any notes or other documents compiled during the process. These will be processed in accordance with our Privacy Notice and Data Protection Policy.

Work-Life Balance and Communication Outside of Working Hours

We are committed to fostering a healthy work-life balance for all employees.

- No Expectation to Respond: Employees are not expected, obligated, or required to read, respond to, or take action on work-related emails, instant messages, phone calls, or other communications outside of their designated working hours.
- Voluntary Communication: Should an employee choose to send work-related communications (e.g., emails) outside of standard working hours, it is understood that this is a voluntary action and does not create an obligation for the recipient(s) to view or reply until their next scheduled working period.
- Respecting Boundaries: All employees and management are required to respect these boundaries and refrain from expecting immediate or same-day responses to communications sent outside of a colleague's contracted hours.

Exceptions to the Policy

While maintaining a healthy work-life balance is paramount, we recognize that certain business functions or critical situations may necessitate communication outside of standard hours.

- Pre-Approved On-Call Duties: This policy does not apply to employees who are formally designated and compensated for on-call responsibilities. Employees in these roles will be provided with a clear, separate schedule and guidelines outlining their obligations to respond during their on-call period.
- Critical Emergency Situations: In the event of a critical, time-sensitive emergency that directly threatens business continuity, physical safety, or essential systems, management may contact relevant personnel. These situations are expected to be rare and should only involve personnel necessary to resolve the immediate crisis.
- System Maintenance: For pre-planned and scheduled system maintenance that requires communication outside of hours, employees involved will be notified in advance and receive appropriate compensation or time in lieu.

IT, Social Media & Media

Speaking on behalf of the Trust and its schools
You are not authorised to make public statements (verbal or written) on behalf of Trust or any individual school and are not authorised to speak to representatives of the media, unless specifically authorised to do so by the CEO.

Internet and Email
You may be required to use email and the internet for work purposes. However, it is important that you are mindful of the need to use email and the internet appropriately. In particular:

- No obscene or offensive language should ever be used in emails;
- Emails of a discriminatory, derogatory or defamatory nature must never be sent;
- Email must never be used as a form of communication which could cause harassment or be abusive to someone;
- Emails should not be copied to people inappropriately;

- If you receive an offensive email this should be reported to the Headteacher. It should not be passed on to other employees;
- Internet sites should only be accessed if they are appropriate to the work that is being carried out;
- email content and language should remain consistent with the Trust's best practice;
- email messages should be remain concise and appropriate;
- Any email (internal or external) referring to identifiable people or containing personal or sensitive information must be encrypted through the use of "confidential" in the subject line. This will automatically encrypt the email to the recipient. Please see the Acceptable Use Guidance for further information.

Employees who are found to have used email inappropriately including some of the examples above, may be liable to disciplinary action up to and including summary dismissal.

During absence (for holiday, sickness or any other reason) the school reserves the right to access your email account. This is necessary to ensure that any school business is addressed in a timely manner.

You should refer to the Trust's ICT Policy and Acceptable Use Guidance for specific information.

Internet sites that cannot be accessed

Under NO circumstances can any pornographic internet site be accessed at any time using a device belonging to the Trust. In addition, social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter cannot be accessed using a device belonging to the Trust during or outside of working hours. Any other internet sites that contain offensive, obscene or otherwise unacceptable material must not be accessed using a device belonging to the Trust during or outside of working hours.

You are reminded that any form of communication with pupils, parents, Directors or members of the school community or other third parties must be appropriate. It must not be discriminatory, derogatory or defamatory in nature and must not reflect negatively on the Trust or the school community. This includes the personal use of social networking sites.

You should refer to the Trust's Acceptable Use Guidance for specific information.

Use of Artificial Intelligence

Staff use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools within our schools is subject to the Trust's dedicated AI Policy. This technology offers significant potential to enhance educational outcomes and administrative efficiency, but its use must be responsible, ethical, and fully compliant with data protection, safeguarding, and academic integrity standards. All staff members must read, understand, and strictly adhere to the AI Policy before using any AI tools for teaching, learning, assessment, or administrative tasks. Failure to comply with the stipulations of the AI Policy may result in disciplinary action.

Personal use of Social Media

The Trust recognises that many employees make use of social media in a personal capacity. While you are not acting on behalf of the Trust, you must be aware that you can damage the reputation of the Trust and the schools if you are recognised as being one of our employees. You should also be aware that parents and pupils may see anything you post.

Employee's using social media are required to comply with the following:

Your online profile (for example, the name of a blog or a Twitter name) must not contain the school's name or make reference to The Staffordshire Schools Multi Academy Trust or individual schools within it.

If you do discuss your work on social media (for example, giving opinions on their specialism or the sector in which the school operates), you must include on your profile a statement along the following lines: "The views I express here are mine alone and do not necessarily reflect the views of my employer."

Any communications that you make in a personal capacity through social media must not:

- bring the Trust into disrepute, for example by:
    - criticising or arguing with pupils, parents, Directors or other third parties;
    - making defamatory comments about individuals or other organisations or groups;
    - posting images that are inappropriate or links to inappropriate content;

- breach confidentiality, for example by:
    - revealing information about or owned by the Trust;
    - giving away confidential information about an individual (such as a colleague, pupil or parent) or organisation (such as another school);
    - discussing the Trust's internal workings (such as future plans that have not been communicated to the school community or public);

- breach copyright, for example by:
    - using someone else's images or written content without permission;
    - failing to give acknowledgement where permission has been given to reproduce something;

- do anything that could be considered discriminatory against, or bullying or harassment of, any individual, for example by:
    - making offensive or derogatory comments relating to sex, gender reassignment, race (including nationality), disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief or age;
    - using social media to bully another individual (such as a colleague, pupil, parent, Director or other third party);
    - posting images that are discriminatory or offensive (or links to such content).

Any breach of these requirements will be dealt with under the Disciplinary Policy and may constitute gross misconduct and could lead to dismissal without notice.

For the purposes of this policy, "social media" will be used to refer to blogs, online discussion forums, online collaborative spaces (i.e. Facebook), media sharing services (i.e. YouTube), and micro-blogging applications (i.e. Twitter). However, given the fast moving nature of technology, this list is not intended to be exhaustive, and "social media" will be used as a blanket term to cover all such sites, and any new versions of this that may be developed in the future.

This policy gives clarity to the way in which social media is to be used by Directors, volunteers and school staff at the Trust.

This policy applies to staff, volunteers, Directors, Members, LAG members, visiting staff and contractors.

There are four key areas:

- Use of social networking by staff/volunteers in a personal capacity;
- Dealing with incidents of online bullying;
- Security & identity theft;
- Trust/School use of social media.

Staff and volunteers private use of Social Media

It is possible that a high proportion of staff and volunteers will have their own social networking site accounts. It is important for them to protect their professional reputation by ensuring that they use their personal accounts in an appropriate manner.

You must ensure that you do not breach the law or disclose the Trust's confidential information, or breach copyright while on Social media sites.

Guidelines:

- You must never add pupils as 'friends' into your personal account (including past pupils under the age of 16);
- You are strongly advised not to add parents as 'friends' into your personal accounts. Where relationships are already established, you should proceed with caution, being fully aware of the social media guidelines and the Staff Code of Conduct;
- You must not post comments about the school, pupils, parents/carers or colleagues including Directors, Members, or LAG members, or reply to comments by others;
- You must not disclose personal data or information about any individual that could breach the Data Protection Act 2018, GDPR Regulations 2018, or the Trust E-Safety policy. You should keep completely; confidential any information regarding the children, their families or other staff, which is learned through the school;
- You must not post photographs of any pupil at the school on their personal social media accounts;
- You must ensure that you do not conduct yourself in a way that is detrimental to the Trust;
- You must not include material that is abusive, defamatory, sexist, racist or that could be interpreted as harassment or bullying;
- You should not share or discuss matters relating to the Trust on your personal social media;
- You should not post anything which may bring the Trust into disrepute
- You must take care not to allow your interaction on these websites to damage working relationships between members of staff and clients of the Trust;
- You must not use social networking sites within lesson times (for personal use);
- You should only use social networking in a way that does not conflict with the current National Teacher's Standards;
- You should review and adjust your privacy settings to give you the appropriate level of privacy and confidentiality;
- You should read and comply with 'Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who Work with Children and Young People';
- Inappropriate use by staff should be referred to the Headteacher in the first instance and may lead to disciplinary action.

Dealing with incidents of online bullying/inappropriate use of social networking sites

The Trust is committed to ensuring that all of its staff, parents/carers and pupils are treated with dignity and respect. Bullying and harassment of any kind will not be tolerated.

Cyber-bullying methods could include text messages, emails, phone calls, instant messenger services, circulating photos or video clips or by posting comments on web sites, blogs or in chat rooms. Personal blogs that refer to colleagues without their consent are also unacceptable. Cyber bullying by staff will be dealt with under the Disciplinary Policy.

Anyone who cyber-bullies could also face criminal prosecution under various laws, including the Malicious Communications Act 1988

The Board understands that, "There are circumstances in which police involvement is appropriate. These include where postings have a racist element or where violence is threatened or encouraged." Furthermore, "Laws of defamation and privacy still apply to the web and it is unlawful for statements to be written which:

- expose (an individual) to hatred, ridicule or contempt;
- cause (an individual) to be shunned or avoided;
- lower (an individual's) standing in the estimation of right-thinking members of society or disparage (an individual in their) business, trade, office or profession." (National Association of Headteachers).

Security and identity theft

You should be aware that social networking websites are a public forum, particularly if they are part of a 'network'. You should not assume that your entries on any website will remain private. You must also be security conscious and should take steps to protect yourself from identity theft, for example by restricting the amount of personal information that you give out. Social networking websites allow people to post detailed personal information such as date of birth, place of birth and, for example, favourite football team which can form the basis of security questions and passwords.

Trust/School Use of Social Media

Official Trust Social Media accounts

There must be a strong pedagogical or business reason for creating official school social media sites. You must not create sites unnecessarily or for trivial reasons which could expose Trust to unwelcome publicity or cause reputational damage.

- All official Trust Social Media accounts must have the prior approval of the CEO in writing.
- All official Trust Social Media accounts must be linked to a Trust email address, and not to an individual's personal email or social media account.
- The URL identity of the site and log in details should be notified to the Headteacher prior to going live. The school office will keep a record of this information, and must be informed immediately if passwords change.
- The content of any school-sanctioned social media site should be solely professional and should reflect well on the School, and Trust.
- Staff must ensure that the School has parent/carer consent to use, post or publish a photograph or video image of the student.

- Staff must ensure that they do not identify a student using their full name. Only first/forenames or initials may be used, where permission is in place.
- Care must be taken that any links to external sites from the account are appropriate and safe;
- Any inappropriate comments on or abuse of Trust-sanctioned social media should immediately be removed and reported to a member of the Leadership Team.
- Staff will not enter into private discussions with others on social media using a Trust school account.
- Staff should not engage with any direct messaging of parents/pupils through social media where the message is not public.
- Staff should not seek to view/link up with parent/pupil accounts. For example, in the case of Twitter, staff should not "follow back" those who follow, share or like School/Trust comments/posts.
- The failure to follow the rules may give rise to disciplinary action.

Twitter

Aims of Using Twitter

- To quickly share and celebrate children's and school achievements, successes and updates;
- To demonstrate safe and responsible use of social media;
- To promote Trust Schools as forward thinking and progressive schools through our use of 21st Century technology.

What is the primary purpose of a Trust School's Twitter Page?

The school Twitter page will be used principally to be followed by staff, parents and other members of our community in order to advertise the excellent work by staff, children, parents and directors. Similarly, it will also contain information detailing special events in school. The aim of this is to run alongside more traditional methods, like sending home letters, and not to replace it.

Who controls content?

The uploading of content for the Twitter page will be controlled by the Headteacher and E-safety Leader.

Who can follow a Trust School?

The school will encourage teaching staff, Directors, parents and members of our community to be followers. We are fully committed to the safety of all children and the Headteacher and E-safety Leader are also our Designated Safeguarding Leads.

The school Twitter account will be a Public account. The Headteacher and E-safety Leader will monitor the followers and block any who appear not to be school focused.

Who will Trust Schools follow?

In order to protect the account from inappropriate content being distributed into the news feed, schools will only follow other users who have obvious benefits to the school (e.g. other educational establishments or organisations who work with children, and local media). These will be decided on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of the Headteacher and E-safety Leader.

What is inappropriate content and referencing and how will it be dealt with?

The Trust schools will welcome any referencing, mentions, or interactions that share the success of the school community. Therefore, we deem any of the following as inappropriate:

- Offensive language or remarks aimed at the school, its staff, parents, governors or others affiliated with the school;
- Unsuitable images or content posted into its feed;
- Unsuitable images or content finding its way from another's account into the school Twitter feed;
- Images or text that infringe upon copyright;
- Comments that aim to undermine the school, its staff, parents, governors or others affiliated with the school.

Any inappropriate content will be deleted and its users will be removed, blocked, and, depending on the nature of the comment, reported to Twitter. Furthermore, incidents of a more serious nature may be reported to the appropriate authority.

WhatsApp

As a general rule, Trust does not approve the use of WhatsApp as a professional communication method between staff.

However, in some circumstances, WhatsApp may be a suitable platform, such as in the Covid-19 pandemic of 2020 - 2022, where information needed to be shared quickly.

Where groups of staff use Whats App or similar platforms to contact each other in a professional capacity, the group must ensure the following:

- The admin function is shared between more than one member of staff;
- The group is clear on its purpose, and relevant staff are not excluded unless they choose not to give their personal mobile numbers to the group. In this case, an alternative way of ensuring all staff members have access to relevant information must be found;
- The Headteacher is aware of all WhatsApp groups being used by their school staff for professional purposes;
- The group is not under any circumstances used for gossip, or banter;
- Inappropriate language is reported to a member of the SLT;
- Plans for social engagements are not undertaken;
- Inappropriate pictures, videos or jokes are not posted;
- Personal or sensitive data is not posted;
- Devices being used for this purpose have adequate security, at a minimum a pin code to open the device.

Mobile Phones

The use of mobile phones within school buildings and grounds is prohibited. You are permitted to use your mobile phones during lunch breaks in the staff room and office only, or for specific authorised safeguarding and risk assessment purposes. You should refer to the Trust's Safeguarding Policy for further details.

Cyber Security

Maintaining robust cyber security is a collective responsibility vital to protecting the Trust's IT infrastructure, sensitive data, and the privacy of our staff, pupils, and families. Staff members are responsible for adhering

to all Trust guidelines and protocols regarding password management, device security, data handling, and the use of Trust IT resources. This includes being vigilant against phishing attempts, reporting any suspicious activity or potential security breaches immediately to the IT department, and following the clear directives set out in the Data Protection, Acceptable Use, and Online Safety & Cyber Security Policies. Staff should also be aware of their school's Business Continuity Plan, and undertake annual cyber security training. Non-compliance with these security standards can lead to severe data breaches, disruption of school operations, and may result in disciplinary action.

Leaving employment

On leaving, for whatever reason, you should return all Trust/school property, e.g. mobile phones, documentation, computer equipment/devices, memory sticks and all paper and electronic documents relating to the Trust and its pupils. Failure to comply with a request to return all property may incur a deduction from any final payment due.

Notice Periods

Support Staff

You are required to give notice to terminate your employment in accordance with national terms and conditions and/or those set out in your Written Statement of Employment Particulars. If you are on a fixed term contract, we will notify you one month before the end of your contract. We will also notify you of any internal vacancies within 3 months of your end date.

The Trust is required to give you notice to terminate your employment in accordance with the statutory notice periods based on your continuous service as set out below or as set out in the Conditions of Service for School Teachers ("The Burgundy Book").

Continuous Service	Statutory Notice period
One month or more but less than 2 years	At least one week's notice
Two years and for each additional complete year of continuous employment for a period of less than 12 years	At least two weeks' notice and one additional week per year, totalling no more than 12 weeks' notice
12 years or more	12 weeks' notice

Teachers

To ensure a smooth transition for our pupils and maintain the continuity of the academic program, teachers are expected to provide written notice of resignation in accordance with their individual employment contracts, and Teacher's Terms and Conditions (The Green Book). Teachers on permanent contracts have specific dates at which they need to provide notice of intention to leave.

These dates are:

31 Oct for termination at the end of the Christmas term.

28 Feb for termination at the end of the Spring term.

31 May for termination at the end of the Summer term.

Headteachers
To ensure a smooth transition for schools, headteachers are expected to provide written notice of resignation in accordance with their individual employment contracts, and Teacher's Terms and Conditions (The Green Book). Headteachers on permanent contracts have specific dates at which they need to provide notice of intention to leave.

These dates are:
30 Sept for termination at the end of the Christmas term.

31 Jan for termination at the end of the Spring term.

30 Apr for termination at the end of the Summer term.

Garden Leave
The Trust may, at its discretion, require an employee who has resigned to take "garden leave", i.e. not to attend the place of work for the duration of the notice period. In that event, employees will be notified in writing and the Trust will have no obligation to provide work during this period, however all contractual benefits would continue to apply.

References
The Trust will provide a reference for current employees when formally requested, in writing, to do so by a prospective employer. The reference will be provided on the Trust's own standard reference form and will be from the Headteacher or CEO. Please note that the Trust will only supply references for staff who have left within the last 12 months from the date of the request. The reference will include the following:

- Name of Staff Member
- Role
- Brief overview of responsibilities
- Start Date with the Trust
- End date with the Trust
- Number of sick days in the last 12 months
- Details of any live disciplinary records
- Details of any safeguarding concerns recorded

Pay in lieu of notice
In the event of the termination of a contract of employment, the Trust may choose to pay compensation in lieu of the period of notice to which the employee is entitled if the Written Statement of Particulars allows. This will be equivalent to the basic salary over the notice period.

Redundancy and Redeployment
Due to a constantly changing environment it may be necessary to adjust staffing levels from time to time based on the needs of the schools within the Trust.

In the event that employees are vulnerable to displacement, the Trust will do its utmost to find other solutions first, including redeployment wherever possible and provide support where redeployment is not possible.

If redundancies are necessary, nationally agreed terms and conditions will be applied in terms of qualification and compensation.

Employee Handbook Declaration

Your contractual Terms and Conditions of Employment are as identified in your written Statement of Employment particulars, and in the first section of this Employee Handbook (as such documents may from time to time be varied in writing) and are the only terms and conditions upon which you are employed by the Trust and may not be varied except by a document in writing that is issued and signed by or on behalf of Trust.

I confirm that I have read, understood and agree to the conditions as stated in the Employee Handbook and understand that the version of this handbook that applies will be the latest version issued.

Employee Signature:

Employee Name:

Date: