



HEARTS ACADEMY TRUST

# **Sabbatical/Career Break Policy**

Adopted: November 2016

HEARTS Academy Trust is committed to providing a happy, caring and safe learning environment for all within a values led context, where everyone feels valued and grows in confidence and independence.

We promote **HAPPINESS** through a creative, exciting and practical curriculum, which generates a love of, and interest in, learning and a resilience and hope which supports us through challenging times.

Great value is placed on pupils' self **ESTEEM** which is developed through a positive and motivated attitude to learning, a healthy lifestyle, good social skills, self-discipline and a positive self-image.

We promote the highest standards of **ACHIEVEMENT** in all areas of the curriculum and help all pupils to fulfil their potential regardless of gender, race or ability.

We foster **RESPECT and RESPONSIBILITY** for all by establishing good relations between the school, home and community. Pupils are taught respect for themselves, others and the environment. They are also taught to take full responsibility for their own choices and responsibility for themselves and their community.

We encourage **TRUTH** and honesty in all aspects of school life – relationships, work and the curriculum and learn to trust and accept others' individuality and uniqueness.

We develop **SPIRITUALITY and SERVICE** so that calm, quiet, reflective times which support deep thought are part of school life and beauty is appreciated. We promote a service culture that reflects our duty to support and show compassion to all members of the community and not just ourselves.



*Children at the HEART*

## **Introduction**

The Trust is committed to providing employees with a work-life balance and offering opportunities to retain experienced and competent members of staff to enable the constant delivery of high quality education.

Sabbatical leave is an extended period of authorised unpaid leave. This policy covers which employees are eligible, provides an overview of the process for applying for sabbatical leave and important information for employees to consider when applying for a period of sabbatical leave.

Sabbatical leave is not an entitlement, but the Trust recognises that for employees to balance their work with other aspirations, commitments and responsibilities during their career, there may be circumstances where it may be beneficial to the member of staff and the Trust to allow an unpaid period of time away from work, for example, to undertake further education/study or travel.

The purpose of sabbatical leave will normally be linked to an employee's personal development outside their employment, allowing the employee to return to work with enhanced skills and ideas. The employee must set out their reason as part of their application in order for the Trust to properly consider the request.

Each request will be considered on a case by case basis taking into account all the individual circumstances and will be subject to approval from the Headteacher.

The Trust will consider any such request and any period of sabbatical leave, where granted, will be entirely at the Trust's discretion and with such conditions as the Trust considers appropriate.

This policy is non contractual and may be subject to review, amendment or withdrawal at the Trust's discretion upon reasonable notice.

### **1. Eligibility**

Employees with 3 or more years' service with the school will be eligible to apply for sabbatical leave

Both full-time and part-time employees with the relevant service are eligible to apply. Casual/relief/agency staff will not be eligible to apply for sabbatical leave.

Sabbatical leave may, at the school's discretion, be granted more than once during the course of an employee's employment, only in exceptional circumstances and only where a period of 3 years or more has passed since the employee returned to work following his/her first period of sabbatical leave.

## **2. Applying for sabbatical leave**

Any eligible employee wishing to make an application for a sabbatical or career break should do so on the form at Appendix 1, addressed to Executive Headteacher or Head of Federation, stating:

- the proposed objectives;
- the proposed duration of the sabbatical leave (normally between one month and one year); and
- the perceived benefits for the school and the employee.

The form should be submitted to the Executive Headteacher/Head of Federation. For applications by the Headteacher the form should be submitted to the CEO/Chair of Directors.

Applications should be submitted at least 2 terms prior to the requested sabbatical start date, eg to start a sabbatical in September the notice would be by 31<sup>st</sup> December, to start a sabbatical in January the notice would be by 30<sup>th</sup> March.

## **3. Considering the request**

Each application will be considered and assessed by the school on an individual basis taking into account a range of relevant issues including but not limited to:

- Workload implications for colleagues
- Ability to recruit cover where necessary
- Financial implications
- Impact on quality and level of education delivery
- Potential benefits to both the member of staff and the school

Consideration of the school's ability to continue to deliver a high standard of education during the period of absence will be paramount.

If a request is refused the member of staff will be notified of the reasons for refusal and of their right of appeal. If a request cannot be accommodated but an alternative arrangement (e.g. a different/shorter duration or different dates would be acceptable) is proposed by the Trust this will be communicated to the employee.

The approval section on the sabbatical request form should be completed and signed and a copy of the form will be provided to the employee.

The request for sabbatical leave and a copy of the decision will be placed on the employee's personal file.

#### **4. Arrangements during the period of sabbatical leave**

During any agreed period of sabbatical leave the employee will be unpaid and the contract will be suspended, which means there will be no entitlement to contractual benefits for the duration of the sabbatical. However, the employee's continuous service will be preserved.

Employees will return to work after their period of sabbatical leave at the salary level applicable immediately prior to the period of authorised leave. The performance management process will be suspended during the sabbatical period and will resume once the employee returns to work.

The employee is required to keep up to date with any relevant developments in their profession/area of work, professional training, accreditation needs, including attendance at specified training/development courses to ensure they maintain their professional registration/membership, and to provide any necessary evidence of such on or prior to their return to work.

The employee will not be permitted to take up employment or provide any consultancy services during any agreed sabbatical leave without the prior written permission of the Trust. All Trust policies will continue to apply for the duration of the sabbatical, including but not limited to, the Code of Conduct, Disciplinary Procedure and safeguarding/Child Protection.

The employee will be required to keep in contact with the school whilst on sabbatical leave on a monthly basis as agreed prior to the start of the sabbatical period.

There is no entitlement to annual leave during the sabbatical period as the contract is suspended. For support staff contracted to work for 52.14 weeks, any accrued but unused holiday entitlement for the current holiday year must be taken prior to the start of the employee's sabbatical leave.

If the employee wishes to terminate their employment during sabbatical leave, they must do so by giving the written notice required according to their contract of employment.

#### **5. Impact on pension**

When a Pension Scheme member has authorised unpaid leave of absence, the period of any such leave will affect their Pension. Information is available on the relevant pension provider website.

## **6. Return from sabbatical leave**

Prior to the employee's return to work, they will be expected to attend an appropriate re-induction meeting to ensure that the employee is able to effectively fulfil the requirements of the role immediately on return to work.

Any training needs will be discussed and agreed with the employee depending on the length of the sabbatical period.

Where staffing structures have altered or changed during the period of sabbatical, staff on sabbatical will be kept informed.

## **7. Varying the duration of the sabbatical leave**

During the period of sabbatical leave, a request for the period to be varied (either extended or reduced) must be made in writing (by letter or by email) giving a minimum of 3 months' notice.

An earlier or later return to work may be accommodated only where it is possible for the school to make suitable arrangements for this and such requests to vary the period of leave will be considered on a case by case basis.

## **8. Failure to return from sabbatical leave**

Failure to return to school at the end of the sabbatical period, without seeking a variation to the sabbatical period, will be regarded as unauthorised absence and will be managed in line with the school's disciplinary procedure.

## **9. Appeal**

Employees have the right to appeal against a refusal to approve a sabbatical request. Appeals should be submitted within 5 days of receiving the decision.

Any appeal lodged against a decision relating to a sabbatical request will be heard by the Directors' appeals committee.

The employee and their chosen representative (normally a representative from a recognised trade union or work colleague) may attend any such appeal meeting to make representation.

The decision of the Directors will be final.

## APPENDIX 1 – SABBATICAL REQUEST FORM

Name	
Position	
Department	

<b>I wish to apply for a period of sabbatical leave</b>			
Proposed duration of sabbatical leave:		Proposed date(s) of sabbatical leave requested:	
		From	
		To	

**Reason for sabbatical leave including benefits for the HEARTS Academy Trust and the staff member:**

Please give details including your proposed objectives during the sabbatical period requested, the reason for the duration requested and details of any perceived benefits to the school of granting this request\*

\* If your sabbatical request is approved, this will affect your pension. An information sheet and details of how to make up any lost pension are available from the pension provider website. You are responsible for obtaining this information and for making any arrangements.

I have read the Sabbatical Policy and understand and agree to the terms contained therein. I understand that any agreed period of sabbatical leave will be unpaid.

I confirm that I will agree to notify the school of any events that may affect my employment that occur during my sabbatical leave.

Signed		Date	
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<b>DECISION BY HEADTEACHER</b>	
Sabbatical Application received from	
<b>Approved / not approved (delete as appropriate)</b>	
Duration of sabbatical	
Start date	
End date	
Contact arrangements	
Reason for decision	
Signed by Headteacher	
Dated	

You have the right to appeal if your request for sabbatical leave has been refused. You should submit any appeal in writing, indicating the grounds for your appeal, within 5 working days of receipt of this decision.