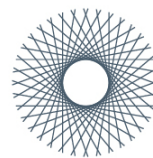


Career break policy



AGORA
LEARNING
PARTNERSHIP

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1 Scope and objectives

- 1.1 It is recognised that during an employee's working life there will be times when personal commitments may take priority over work e.g. bringing up children, longer term care for sick or dependent relatives, or pursuing a course of further education. The Trust may be able to accommodate such personal commitments, where operationally practicable, through career breaks. Employees should also consider flexible working requests depending on their individual needs.
- 1.2 Career breaks enable employees to take an unpaid break from work for personal reasons whilst maintaining continuity of service with the Trust. The employee should try to give as much notice as possible to commence a career break (ideally 3 months) but a shorter notice can be accepted on a discretionary basis for example where a dependent needs care at short notice.
- 1.3 With the exception of continuity of service all other terms of the employment contract with the Trust will be suspended. On return, at an agreed date following the career break, the employee will be able to return to the same or similar post within the Trust without competitive selection (see below regarding restructures whilst an employee is absent on a career break).
- 1.4 A career break may be considered appropriate for example:
 - to extend a period of maternity/adoption leave
 - to care for dependants
 - to enter full time education

- extended foreign travel

These reasons are not all inclusive and others may be considered, with the exception of taking up other full time paid employment.

- 1.5 Employees who are on a career break may in exceptional circumstances take up a part time role for example to support a university course or extended travel. Permission must be sought from the Trust before taking this up.

2 Eligibility

All permanent employees with at least two years continuous service with the Trust regardless of the number of hours worked are eligible to apply for a career break.

3 Length of career break

The minimum length of break is 3 months, for teaching and classroom based staff the expectation would be for this to equate to a term, and the maximum is 1 year. There is no limit to the number of career breaks an employee can take, providing they return to work at the Trust for a minimum of 2 years between each break.

4 Career break application

Employees who are considering a career break as outlined in this policy should discuss this in the first instance with the headteacher of the school, before making a formal application in writing to the CEO of the Trust.

5 Pension deductions

- 5.1 Pension deductions will not automatically be made during a Career Break. If an employee on the Local Government Pension Scheme wishes to request to pay Additional Pension Contributions (APCs) to the Scheme to cover the amount of pension 'lost' during this period, they should make an election to the Local Pensions Partnership (LPP) within 30 days of returning to work.
- 5.2 Employees can visit the LGPS pension website at this [link](#) and click the 'Buy Lost Pension' option to calculate the cost to buy back lost pension (contact the Trust's payroll provider to find out the amount of lost pensionable pay to enter into the website).

- 5.3 After using the quote on the website above employees should, using the application form provided on this website, submit the application to the Trust's payroll provider and send a copy to the Local Pensions Partnership.
- 5.4 Contact the LPP on 01992 555 466 or hertsccl@localpensionspartnership.org.uk with any questions about the purchase of lost pension.

6 Organisational change

- 6.1 Consideration of any planned organisational change should be taken before a career break is authorised, particularly where there is potential for a reduction in posts.
- 6.2 If an employee is on a career break when a restructure is being considered, every effort should be made to contact them in order for them to have input into any consultations or feedback processes. Employees may be given the opportunity to return to work early if they wish to, if the temporary cover can be ended at no additional cost.
- 6.3 Employees on a career break must be included in selection processes even if the Trust is unable to make contact with them.

7 Extending the career break

- 7.1 If the employee wishes to extend their career break, if the break taken was to be less than one year, they must do so in writing normally giving as much notice as possible. The Trust will consider the extension along the same lines as the original request and may grant up to 1 year in total.

8 Cutting short the career break

- 8.1 There will be no automatic right to cut short a career break but the Trust will consider such requests from an employee if they can be accommodated.

- 8.2 *If the employee does not return from the career break*
If an employee does not wish to return from a career break, they should confirm this in writing at least 4 weeks' prior to their expected return date, for those employed under School Teachers Pay and Conditions of Service the appropriate notice must be given in accordance with those terms. If, on the Trust writing to the employee to confirm the return date, the employee

does not respond, their contract will be terminated on that expected return date.

9 Conduct during a Career break

Employees should be aware that they remain employees of the Trust during a career break. Whilst an employee's off duty hours are their personal concern they should not put themselves in a position where their duties and private interests conflict. The standards of the *Trust's Code of conduct (employees)* should be maintained during a career break.

10 Returning to Work after a Career Break

When an employee returns to work following a career break, they may need support in order to integrate. This should include:

- updating them on any changes that may have occurred in the school and the Trust
- going through work plans and priorities
- setting up meetings with colleagues to update on work that has been done/is being done
- ensuring the returnee undertakes any statutory update training specifically relating to safeguarding
- registering the returnee on any relevant training and skills development courses

It is also important that the returnee review important documentation and policies to understand changes.