

SABBATICAL LEAVE POLICY

	March 2024	Review date
	March 2022	Approved by Board of Trustees
V1	Summer 2018	Approved by Board of Trustees
Version	Date	Description

Sabbatical Leave Policy

Introduction

Horizon Trust Board recognise that there may be times when employees (including the Headteacher) wish to take extended periods of time away from work during the course of their employment with the trust in order to pursue other interests outside of work including but not limited to: research, further education or travel. The purpose of sabbatical leave will normally be linked to personal development outside the usual confines of the job, allowing the employee to return to work with new ideas and enhanced skills.

A sabbatical will be an authorised unpaid leave of absence however, sabbatical leave does not constitute a break in the period of continuous service. When calculating the total length of service, the time taken on a sabbatical will not be counted.

Sabbaticals are granted at the Trustees discretion and are not an entitlement.

Eligibility

This scheme applies to all permanent employees with at least 24 months continuous service with Horizon MAT. Employees may apply for more than one sabbatical during their employment however any previously agreed sabbaticals may be taken into consideration before approving further requests. Sabbatical leave will not be granted to any employee who has been subject to formal disciplinary procedures within the past two years.

Length of sabbatical

A sabbatical granted under this scheme will be for a period 12 months beginning 1st September and ending 31st August.

Approval process

All requests for sabbaticals should be made in writing to the Headteacher or CEO for central staff, stating the proposed objectives of the sabbatical and the perceived benefits for the employer and the employee at least 6 months before the leave of absence is to commence. In the case of the Headteacher, the request should be made to the Chair of Trustees and referred to the trust board.

The Headteacher/CEO, in liaison with the Chair of Trustees, will consider requests. The decision on whether to grant a sabbatical will be entirely at the employers discretion and the decision will be confirmed to the employee in writing within 20 working days of receiving the request.

Each request will be considered on an individual basis taking into account a range of relevant issues including but not limited to:

- Financial implications
- Workload implications for colleagues
- Impact on teaching and learning standards
- Statutory obligations

Employees granted sabbatical leave will be required to use any outstanding annual leave entitlement accrued up until the start of the sabbatical period and will not be allowed to retain it to take on their return or receive pay in lieu of annual leave.

Annual leave will not be accrued during the period of sabbatical leave.

Contact

Methods and frequency of contact during the period of leave must be agreed between the employee and the Headteacher before the leave period begins.

Where organisational changes are proposed in the school during the leave period which may affect the employee, every attempt will be made to contact them in a timely manner and treat them in same way as other employees.

The employee is required to keep the school informed of any change of address or change of circumstances that arise during the sabbatical.

Effect on employee terms and conditions of employment

- There is no entitlement to payment of salary, allowances, annual or bank holiday leave, occupational sick pay or occupational maternity / paternity pay during sabbatical leave.
- All school's property should be returned prior to the start of the sabbatical unless otherwise agreed with the Headteacher.
- The purpose of sabbatical leave is to allow employees time away from work to pursue personal interests such as travel, voluntary / community work, etc. Therefore the employee will not be permitted to take up employment or provide any consultancy services to any third party except with the Employer's express consent, and all provisions as to confidential information will continue to apply.
- Horizon MAT will not be liable for any tax or national insurance contributions during sabbatical leave.

Pension Scheme

- Horizon MAT will not contribute pension contributions into the employee's pension scheme during their period of sabbatical leave.
- It will be the responsibility of the employee to make separate arrangements with their pension provider to cover any periods of the unpaid service.
- Employees on authorised leave of absence from the Pension Scheme will remain eligible for death in service benefits.

Child Care Vouchers

- Participation in the Childcare Voucher Scheme will cease at the start of the sabbatical period and on return employees will be required to make a new application to re-join the scheme.

Salary & Competency Reviews

- Any cost of living salary increases that the Trustees implement during the period of leave will be applied accordingly once the employee returns to work.
- If the Headteacher undertakes a competency review during the period of leave then the employee will be eligible for a review on their return. This review should take place between 3 - 6 months of being back at work.

Return to work

Employees returning to work following a sabbatical will normally return to the same job, however, if this is not reasonably practical then the trustees will make every effort to redeploy the employee to a similar role on a similar grade.

If the employee fails to return to work on the agreed date, the Headteacher will make every effort to contact the employee to confirm the situation and the reasons for this. If the Headteacher is unable to contact the employee, it will be assumed that the employee has resigned and the last day of service will be recorded as the agreed date of return.

Right of Appeal

Employees have the right to appeal if their request for a sabbatical has been refused.

Appeals should be made in writing within 5 working days of receipt of the decision to be appealed and should be addressed to the Chair of Trustees as outlined in the letter. The Chair of Trustees will contact the COO for guidance.

Appeal hearings will take place as soon as reasonably possible upon receipt of the written appeal. A panel of at least 3 trustees will hear the appeal and will be assisted by the trust COO.



Generally, the outcome of the appeal hearing will be confirmed verbally at the appeal hearing; however in some circumstances it may be necessary to adjourn, to complete further investigations. In these situations, the appeal hearing meeting will be reconvened to confirm the decision verbally. In all cases written confirmation will follow.

The decision of the appeal hearing is final and no further right of appeal exists.