



IRONSTONE ACADEMY TRUST

Carer Leave Policy

for school based staff

Adopted By : Ironstone Academy Trust

Date : January 2019

Review Date	Type of Review	Comments
June 2013	HR Review	Updated contact details at paragraphs 7.2 & 7.3
January 2019		Reviewed and Updated

Revised : June 2013
CARER LEAVE POLICY

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 IAT schools are committed to supporting employees who have caring responsibilities away from the workplace. The schools have and are developing a range of policies to assist employees including special leave, parental leave, paternity leave, maternity support leave, adoption and maternity leave, flexible working and special leave. It is recognised that these carers, from time to time, need additional support to help them to balance their contractual obligations at work with their domestic responsibilities, and may **on occasions and in emergency situations** need some time away from work.
- 1.2 Schools do want to help Carers and also provide for their needs, in a consistent way. In order to do so this policy will be of help in promoting consistency across schools and employees. For this to be applied consistently and fairly, it must be recognised that employees are not all in the same position to begin with. **It is expected that all employees who are carers will use the regular school breaks to meet regular and planned needs.**
- 1.3 In considering applications for Carer Leave, as well as considering assisting with paid leave, Head Teachers may consider agreeing temporary variations in working hours or patterns where this would assist and, in line with legislative provision, unpaid Carer leave can be granted and may be appropriate in certain situations. Further advice may need to be taken from Human Resources.
- 1.4 **When deciding whether or not it is appropriate to grant Carer Leave, Head Teachers will also have to make an assessment based on the school, the children and any support available to them.** The Head Teacher will try to facilitate this whenever possible but employees must be aware that this is not an automatic entitlement and consideration will be given to whether this is something that could be arranged during the school holiday periods. **Carer Leave is not intended to 'top-up' holiday periods.**

2.0 Scope

- 2.1 This policy is appropriate for all employees of the school.

3.0 Aim

- 3.1 The aim of the policy is to assist employees to balance their caring responsibilities for dependant family members whilst continuing to meet their contractual obligations at work. A dependant could be a child or an adult.

4.0 Paid Leave

- 4.1 The school's policy on Carer Leave allows employees to take up to a maximum of 5 days **paid** leave in any financial year to care for a dependant child or adult. It should be noted that:
- Leave will be pro rata for part time employees.
 - A financial year runs from 1st April to 31st March the following year.
 - This leave is **not an entitlement** but may be granted subject to the needs of the school and approval by the Head Teacher.
- 4.2 It is **not** intended that an employee will normally take 5 days Carer Leave in a block, although occasionally circumstances may merit it. In most cases, one day or less should be sufficient to deal with the problem. For example, if a child falls ill with chickenpox and the employee has no-one to stay with the child (who would normally be at school), then a half day or a day's leave should be enough to help the employee deal with the crisis and with the immediate care of the child, visiting the doctor if necessary, and making longer term care arrangements if appropriate.
- 4.3 Employees may request Carer Leave to deal with an unexpected or sudden problem concerning a dependant, for example in situations where the dependant child or adult:
- is ill or injured and needs the employee to look after them for the immediate period
 - needs the employee to arrange their longer term care
 - needs the employee to deal with an unexpected disruption or breakdown in care, such as the unexpected closure of a school, day centre or temporary interruption to other similar forms of regular provision
 - in an emergency situation a dependant needs to be accompanied to a GP, dentist, clinic or hospital appointment (which has to be arranged at short notice and **excludes** routine check-ups where these can be organised around working arrangements)
 - needs care following an operation or hospitalisation
 - is involved in any other unforeseeable or unexpected occurrence that necessitates an immediate response from the employee, and which cannot be addressed whilst the employee is at work.
- 4.4 This list is not exhaustive and leave can be granted in other circumstances. Contact Human Resources if further advice is required.

5.0 **ELIGIBILITY**

- 5.1 To be eligible for Carer Leave, employees must be responsible for providing care to a dependant, defined as follows:
- Husband
 - Wife
 - Partner (who may be the same sex)
 - Son or Daughter (including adopted children)
 - Parent
 - Someone living with the employee as part of their family, but excluding lodgers, boarders etc.
- 5.2 In exceptional circumstances, consideration may be given to extending the eligibility, providing that the employee is the primary carer of the dependant. The Head Teacher, in discussion with Human Resources, must consider any such exceptions.
- 5.3 Where employees need a longer period of absence from work than that permitted by the policy then consideration to unpaid leave can be given. Please refer to the Special Leave Policy.
- 5.4 Fairness and consistency of application are important in this policy. Employees must be aware that, in order to ensure school resources are expended properly, they may be asked to provide proof or declaration of the caring relationship.

6.0 PROCEDURE

- 6.1 Requests for leave in an emergency situation should be made to the Head Teacher/Deputy Head Teacher, who will note the reasons for the absence from work. On the employee's return to work, formal approval should be sought from the Head Teacher as below.
- 6.2 Requests for Carer Leave should be made to the Head Teacher. The Head Teacher should discuss the reason for the request with the employee to ensure a consistent approach across the school.

7.0 OTHER SUPPORT FOR CARERS

- 7.1 It is recognised that those with caring responsibilities may require additional support to help them balance their work and caring commitments. Caring can be a very rewarding experience, but it can also bring stresses and strains that impact on the carers' lives. This impact can be financial, practical, medical and/or emotional and should be taken into account when the needs of the person they care for are being considered by agencies. Carers should be asked routinely how they are coping and what support they need in their own right. They should be advised of their right to a Carer's Assessment by the relevant Social Care Department.

- 7.2 Employees who live or work in Middlesbrough and who wish to discuss how caring affects them and the support available can contact Middlesbrough Department of Social Care on (01642) 726004.
- 7.3 Additional support available for employees with caring responsibilities includes:
- Access to the Council's 24 hour Employee Assistance Programme (Telephone 0800 716 017).
 - Counselling, where recommended, via the Occupational Health provider or Head Teacher will be funded by the Council for up to 6 sessions.
 - Carer Support Group run by Adult Social Care (for more information contact Middlesbrough Department of Social Care on (01642) 726004.
 - Benefit advice from Middlesbrough Council's Welfare Rights advice line on (01642) 729242.
- 7.4 Other policies (in place or in progress) that support employees with their caring responsibilities include:
- Parental Leave
 - Maternity Support Leave
 - Adoption Leave
 - Maternity Leave
 - Special Leave
 - Flexible Working for Parents and Carers

8.0 EQUALITY STATEMENT

- 8.1 The Carer Leave Policy must be applied fairly to all employees irrespective of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.