



IRONSTONE ACADEMY TRUST

CARER LEAVE POLICY FOR STAFF

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CARER LEAVE POLICY

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Our Trust is committed to supporting employees who have caring responsibilities away from the workplace. We have 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 The Trust does want to support where possible, those staff with caring responsibilities and also provide for their needs, in a consistent way across all schools within the Trust. In order to do so this policy will be of help in promoting consistency across all 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, if this is not possible or in exceptional circumstances special leave can be considered.**
- 1.3 In considering applications for Carer Leave, as well as considering assisting with paid leave, Headteachers 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 considerations to be in line with the special leave policy and the flexible working policy. Advice may need to be taken from Human Resources.
- 1.4 **When deciding whether or not it is appropriate to grant Carer Leave, Headteachers will also have to make an assessment based on the school, the children and any support available to them.** The Headteacher 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.

2.0 Scope

- 2.1 This policy is appropriate for all employees within Ironstone Academy Trust.

3.0 Definitions

- 3.1 The term “**the Trust**” is used to refer to the Ironstone Academy Trust.
- 3.2 The term “**Trust Board**” means the board of directors of the Ironstone Academy Trust company.
- 3.3 The term “**school**” or “**schools**” is used within this policy to refer to the academies which form part of the Trust.
- 3.4 The term “**employee**” is used throughout this policy to cover anyone who is employed by the Trust at any of its premises.

3.5 The term “**Headteacher**” is used throughout this policy to refer to anyone who is employed in the capacity of Headteacher, (i.e. Head of School, Headteacher or Executive Headteacher).

3.6 The term “**Line Manager**” is the person who holds the direct responsibility for the management of another member of staff.

4.0 Aim

4.1 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 and the employer’s legal obligations in relation to work life balance. A dependant could be a child or an adult.

5.0 Responsibilities

5.1 The responsibilities of employee, Headteacher, line manager and/or senior member of staff are set out throughout this policy.

5.2 It is the responsibility of all employees of the Trust to familiarise themselves with this policy. All policies can be found on the Ironstone Teams network.

6.0 Paid Leave

6.1 The Trust’s policy on Carer Leave allows employees to take up to a maximum of 5 days **paid** leave in any 12 month rolling period to care for a dependant child or adult. It should be noted that:

- Leave will be pro rata for part time employees.
- This leave is **not an entitlement** but may be granted subject to the needs of the school and approval by the Headteacher.

6.2 It is **not** intended that an employee will usually 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.

6.3 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 or where no other options are available (routine check-ups should **where they can** be organised around working arrangements)
- needs care pre/post 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.

6.4 This list is not exhaustive and leave may be granted in other circumstances. Contact Human Resources if further advice is required.

7.0 Eligibility

7.1 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, pets etc.

7.2 In exceptional circumstances, consideration may be given to extending the eligibility, providing that the employee is the primary carer of the dependant. The Headteacher will consider any such exceptions.

7.3 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, which can be found on the Trust SharePoint.

7.4 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.

8.0 Procedure

8.1 Requests for leave in an emergency situation should be made to the Headteacher, who will note the reasons for the absence from work. On the employee's return to work, formal application must be followed and approval for paid or unpaid leave sought from the Headteacher as below.

8.2 Requests for Carer Leave should be made to the Headteacher on the 'Request for Special/Carer Leave' form. (see Appendix A). The Headteacher should discuss the reason for the request with the employee to ensure a consistent approach across the school and the Trust.

9.0 Other Support for Carers

9.1 It is recognised that those with caring responsibilities may require additional support to help them with work life balance 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. Line Managers should be aware of any staff they have with caring responsibilities and should ask as a matter of routine if the school can offer any support. They should be advised to contact the individuals social care contact or department to ensure they have all the support available to them.

9.2 Additional support available for employees with caring responsibilities includes:

- Counselling, where recommended by GP or our Occupational Health provider. The Trust also has access to counselling.
- Benefit advice from Local Authority Welfare Rights advice lines.
Redcar and Cleveland Council - 01642 771166.
Middlesbrough Council – 01642 729242

9.3 Other policies (in place or in progress) that support employees with their caring responsibilities include the following:

- Parental Leave
- Maternity Support Leave
- Adoption Leave
- Maternity Leave
- Paternity Leave
- Special Leave
- Flexible Working for Parents and Carers

10.0 Equality Statement

10.1 Those within IAT who have responsibilities defined within this policy will carry out their duties with regard to the Trust's Equality Statement and commitment to abide by the Equality Act 2010:

- accepting our legal duty to ban unfair treatment and achieve equal opportunities in the classroom, the workplace and in wider society. We have regard for our duty to:
 - Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
 - Advance equal opportunity
 - Foster good relations

- 10.2 The Trust has a legal obligation to avoid and eliminate discrimination by ensuring that the principle of equality in employment is observed, both in the way we recruit, promote and develop existing and potential employees and in the way we behave towards each other.
- 10.3 In accordance with equal opportunities legislation and the Trust's Equality Policy, unjustified discrimination, harassment or bullying on any grounds, whether intentional or unintentional, will not be tolerated.
- 10.4 Complaints of discrimination should be made under the grievance policy and will be investigated fairly and thoroughly and, where upheld, will be dealt with through the disciplinary procedure.

NB: For the purposes of authorisation, where the school has an Executive Headteacher the Head of School may be the authoriser.

REQUEST FOR SPECIAL/CARER LEAVE

Employees to complete Sections 1 and 2 in all cases, and Sections 3 or 4 where applicable. Completed form to be given to your Line Manager for approval.

1. Employee Details

Name: Job Title:

Name of School:

2. Details of Special Leave Requested

Dates Leave Requested From: To:

Time of appointment (if applicable):

Total No. of Working Days/Hours Requested (inclusive)

Reason for request:

.....
.....

Signature: Date:

Please Note: Pension contributions will **not** be made during any unpaid absence. For members of the LGPS, employees may elect to pay these contributions.

3. Time off to attend Antenatal Appointments – Expectant fathers/partners/ Parental Order parents (surrogacy)

The following declaration must be signed for all requests for unpaid time off work to attend antenatal appointments (up to 2 appointments).

I hereby declare:

- a) that the time off requested is to accompany a pregnant woman to an antenatal appointment
- b) that I have a qualifying relationship with the mother or child
- c) that the appointment is made on the advice of a registered medical practitioner/
Registered Nurse/Midwife

Name:

Signature: Date:

Date and time of appointment must be completed above in section 2.

4. Time off to attend Adoption Appointments

Single adopters have the right to take paid time off work to attend up to 5 adoption appointments. Joint adopters may elect for one adopter to take paid time off work to attend up to 5 appointments and the other adopter may elect to take unpaid time off work up to 2 appointments. **Evidence of appointment must be provided and attached to this form.**

The following declaration must be completed and signed for all requests to attend adoption appointments:

- a) I have been notified by the adoption agency that a child is to be, or is expected to be, placed with me for adoption
- b) I wish to take time off work to attend an adoption appointment that has been arranged by or at the request of the adoption agency
- c) The adoption appointment will take place before the date of the child's placement for adoption.

Name:

Signature: Date:

Date and time of appointment must be completed above in section 2.

5. To be completed by Headteacher

The relevant evidence/declaration has been provided to support this request

YES/NO

I **do/do not** approve this request:

Without Pay (Days) **AND/OR** With Pay (Days)

Name:

Signature:

Date:

A copy of this form will be held on your personal record.