



## Selsdon Primary School Sabbatical Leave Policy 2025

Review Date: June 2027

### Introduction

Selsdon Primary School is committed to provide our employees with a good work-life balance and we would like to offer 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 outlines important information for employees to consider when applying for a period of sabbatical leave.

Sabbatical leave is not an entitlement. However, the school 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 to allow an unpaid period of time away from work.

Each request will be considered on a case-by-case basis taking into account the school's requirements and the criteria laid out in this document.

### Key Features

- Sabbatical Leave is unpaid.
- The Headteacher may agree a period of absence of up to 12 months within an academic year.
- Individuals on sabbatical leave remain an employee during the period of absence and continuity of service remains in place during the leave period.
- The same standards relating to conduct outside of work will apply to an employee on sabbatical leave in the same way as when working normally.
- Employees return to their substantive or comparable post following sabbatical leave, and on the same terms and conditions, subject to the post not having been affected by redundancy, reorganisation or other business change.
- While on sabbatical leave, employees will not be entitled to any benefits under occupational sickness, maternity, paternity or adoption schemes.



## Eligibility

Employees with three, or more, years' service with the school will be eligible to apply for sabbatical leave. Both full-time and part-time employees are eligible to apply.

Casual, relief or agency staff will not be eligible to apply for sabbatical leave.

Applicants must:

- not have a current formal warning under the school's discipline or performance management procedures, and
- not be subject to formal action under sickness or performance management policies, and
- not have returned from sabbatical leave in the previous five years.

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

## Annual Leave – support staff on all round contracts

- Support staff working on an all year round contract only accrue statutory leave entitlement (28 days plus bank holidays) and annual leave entitlements will be adjusted accordingly.
- Where the employee is employed on an all year round contract, any accrued but unused holiday entitlement for the current holiday year must be taken prior to the start of the employee's sabbatical leave.
- Employees should return from sabbatical leave with a proportionate amount of untaken leave for the remaining length of the leave year.

## Applying

The process for applying for unpaid leave is as follows:

The employee should discuss the request with the Headteacher informally. This gives the employee and the Headteacher the opportunity to discuss the benefits and barriers; the timing and the implications for the employee and the implications their role has on the School's service.

For applications by the Headteacher, the application will be submitted to the Chair of Governors. If the request for sabbatical leave is from a member of the Senior Leadership Team the Headteacher will discuss the request with the Chair of Governors.



The employee makes a formal application for the leave. The employee makes their request in writing explaining the proposed start and end dates for the intended sabbatical, the reasons the leave is requested, any difficulties they envisage for the school and possible solutions. For support staff working all year round contracts, how they are planning their annual leave so that they do not return with an excessive amount of untaken leave, and how contact will be maintained. The employee should give as much notice as possible.

The Headteacher will seek to balance the interests of the employee against the implications for the service. A range of issues are likely to be important and will be considered including:

- The period of time requested – unpaid leave will not exceed 12 months
- Any outstanding annual leave – sabbatical leave will not be granted until all paid leave is taken (where the employee is employed on an all year round contract) in instances where the employee is requesting 12 months sabbatical leave
- Previous requests for unpaid leave and whether they were granted
- Impact on the quality and level of education delivery
- Any benefit to the school
- Cover arrangements and impact on the workload of others
- Financial implications

## Outcome

The Headteacher will respond to the employee with a decision within 10 working days of the formal request having been made. This timescale may be extended by mutual agreement. Employees then have 10 working days to appeal a decision and any appeal must be submitted in writing to the Chair of Governors.

- The request for sabbatical leave, and a copy of the decision, will be placed on the employee's personal file.
- Sabbatical leave will be unpaid
- After the sabbatical leave members of staff will be guaranteed a return to work under the same terms and conditions, and to a comparable position of employment they had prior to the sabbatical leave
- The member of staff will return to the same incremental point at which they left.
- If a request is refused the member of staff will be notified of the reasons for refusal in writing.
- If a request can be accommodated but an alternative arrangement (e.g. a different/shorter duration or different dates which might be acceptable) is proposed by the school this will be communicated to the employee in writing.

The date of return will be agreed and confirmed prior to the start of the sabbatical.



## 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.
- An employee on sabbatical will not be entitled to sick pay. However, the employee's continuous service will be preserved.
- Employer's pension contributions will not be sustained during the period of leave, although members of staff may be able to sustain their own individual contributions through arrangements with the relevant pensions body, at their own expense.
- Employees will return to work after their period of sabbatical leave at the salary point applicable immediately prior to the period of authorised leave.
- It is the employee's responsibility to check the effect of the sabbatical leave on their conditions of service, tax liabilities, pension entitlements etc.
- The performance management process will be suspended during the sabbatical period and will resume once the employee returns to work. However, the employee is entitled to be assessed for part of the performance year that they are working whether that is before or after the sabbatical or a combination of both
- 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 school.
- All school policies will continue to apply for the duration of the sabbatical period, including but not limited to, the Code of Conduct, Disciplinary Procedure and Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy.
- The employee will be required to keep in contact with the school whilst on sabbatical leave on a basis as agreed prior to the start of the sabbatical period.

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## 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 they are able to fulfil effectively 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.

If the employee wants to return to work earlier than agreed, they should give eight weeks' notice and arrange to meet their manager.



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.

Failure to return to school at the end of the sabbatical period will be regarded as unauthorised absence and will be managed in line with the school's disciplinary procedure.

## **Redundancy and Business Reorganisation**

Employees on sabbatical leave have the same rights as other employees in relation to reorganisation and redundancy. In the event that an employee's post is affected by such situations while on sabbatical leave, the school will take all reasonable steps to inform and consult about the changes.

Subject to providing sufficient contact details, an employee on sabbatical leave will be informed about, and given reasonable opportunity to take part in, any re-organisation or redundancy process that takes place when they are away from work.

## **Change of Circumstances**

Employees on sabbatical leave are required to notify the school of any relevant circumstances including any change of their address or other contact details and whether they take up paid employment.