



## **St. Mary's Catholic Primary School**

### **Policy on Sabbatical Leave**

**Date: March 2018**

**Person Responsible: Mr Jonathan Sims and Miss Clare Phipps**

**Review Date: Autumn 2021**

#### **1. Introduction**

The school is committed to providing employees with a work-life balance and offering 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.

The policy covers which employees are eligible, provides an overview of the process for applying for sabbatical leave and important information for employees to consider when applying for a period of sabbatical leave. Sabbatical leave is not an entitlement, but 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 and the school to allow an unpaid period of time away from work, for example, to undertake further education/study or travel.

The purpose of sabbatical leave will normally be linked to an employee's personal development outside their employment, allowing the employee to return to work with enhanced skills and ideas. The employee must set out their reason as part of their application in order for the school to properly consider the request. Each request will be considered on a case by case basis taking into account all the individual circumstances and will be subject to approval from governing body. The school will consider any such request and any period of sabbatical leave, where granted, will be entirely at the school's discretion and with such conditions as the school considers appropriate. Only one member of staff may be on sabbatical at any time. This policy is non contractual and may be subject to review, amendment or withdrawal at the school's discretion upon reasonable notice.

#### **2. Eligibility**

Employees with five or more years' service with the school will be eligible to apply for sabbatical leave. Both full-time and part-time employees with the relevant service are eligible to apply. Casual/relief/agency staff will not be eligible to apply for sabbatical leave.

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

#### **3. Applying for sabbatical leave**

Any eligible employee wishing to make an application for sabbatical leave should do so on the form at Appendix1 stating:

- the proposed objectives;
- the proposed duration of the sabbatical leave (normally between one month and one year); and
- the perceived benefits for the school and the employee.

The form should be submitted to the Headteacher(s).

- For applications by the Headteacher(s) the form should be submitted to the Chair of Governors. Applications should be submitted before the May half term break prior to the academic year in which the requested sabbatical start date, so that cover arrangements can be put in place

#### **4. Considering the request**

Each application will be considered and assessed by the school on an individual basis taking into account a range of relevant issues including but not limited to:

- Workload implications for colleagues
- Ability to recruit cover where necessary
- Financial implications
- Impact on quality and level of education delivery
- Potential benefits to both the member of staff and the school

Consideration of the school's ability to continue to deliver a high standard of education during the period of absence will be paramount. The Headteacher(s) will make a recommendation to the governing body, which will make the decision on whether to grant the application.

The decision of the governors will be final.

If a request is refused the member of staff will be notified of the reasons for refusal. If a request be accommodated but an alternative arrangement (e.g. a different/shorter duration or different dates would be acceptable) is proposed by the school this will be communicated to the employee.

The approval section on the sabbatical request form should be completed and signed and a copy of the form will be provided to the employee. The request for sabbatical leave and a copy of the decision will be placed on the employee's personal file.

#### **5. 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.

Employees will return to work after their period of sabbatical leave at the salary level applicable immediately prior to the period of authorised leave. The performance management process will be suspended during the sabbatical period and will resume once the employee returns to work. 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, 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. There is no entitlement to annual leave during the sabbatical period as the contract is suspended.

For support staff contracted to work for 52.14 weeks, any accrued but unused holiday entitlement for the current holiday year must be taken prior to the start of the employee's sabbatical leave. 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.

#### **6. Impact on pension**

When a Pension Scheme member has authorised unpaid leave of absence, the period of any such leave will affect their pension. There is an information sheet available from the school office

### **7. 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 the employee is able to effectively fulfil 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.

### **8. Failure to return from sabbatical leave**

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.