

Sabbatical Policy

1. Introduction

The organisation recognises some staff may wish to take time off work for a number of reasons.

A sabbatical which may also be referred to as a career break, is when staff are guaranteed re-employment with the organisation at the end of the break, provided they have adhered to the terms and conditions of the agreement. The post they return to will be of equal status but there is no guarantee of returning to the same post.

This document does not form part of a contract of employment and may be changed from time to time in line with current best practice and statutory requirements, and to ensure business needs are met. Staff will be consulted and advised of any changes as far in advance as possible of the change being made, unless the change is required by law.

2. Eligibility

To be eligible for a Sabbatical staff must:

- Have completed at least two years' continuous service.
- Have a satisfactory performance record.
- Have a satisfactory attendance record.
- Indicate a firm intention to return to work.
- Have no live disciplinary warning.

Each case will be considered on its own merits in light of personal circumstances and the business needs. The commencement and time allowed for each career break will be dictated by the needs of the business.

3. Length of Sabbatical

A sabbatical can be taken for a minimum of three months to a maximum of 12 months. Staff can take a maximum of two sabbaticals during their employment with the organisation. If they staff wish to apply for a second sabbatical, they must have a further two years' continuous service following from the first sabbatical.

4. Application for Sabbatical

An application for a sabbatical must be made to the senior officer in writing at least three months before the requested start date of the sabbatical.

Confirmation of acceptance or non-acceptance will be made in writing within 30 days of the application.

5. Terms & Conditions of Employment During Sabbatical

During any sabbatical, staff will have no entitlement to any remuneration including payment of salary, annual leave, sick leave, pension contributions or any other contractual or statutory benefits.

Failure to return to work will be treated as a resignation.

The period of the sabbatical will not count towards calculating any statutory or contractual benefits.

If the organisation makes any changes to the post/grade/salary or any other conditions during the sabbatical break, they will write to the staff informing them of any changes.

i) Death Benefit Scheme

If staff are entitled to the Death Benefit Scheme in accordance with the terms and conditions, this benefit shall continue to apply during the sabbatical and shall be calculated by reference to their earnings immediately before the sabbatical commenced.

ii) Pension Scheme

Organisational pension contributions will be suspended for the duration of the sabbatical and will not count towards the pensionable service.

Upon return from sabbatical, they will be entitled to make good all contributions to the pension scheme omitted during the sabbatical within a period agreed by the Scheme Trustees. The organisation will not however invoke contributions for the period.

iii) Professional Membership Fees

During sabbatical, the organisation will not pay any professional subscriptions in respect of membership of professional bodies.

iv) Redundancy

If redundancy should occur during sabbatical, staff will be contacted in writing and the appropriate process will be used under the redundancy procedure.

v) Incremental Rises

Staff returning from sabbatical will not be automatically entitled to any incremental increase which may have occurred against their position. Staff will however, be eligible to receive any cost of living rise in place at the time of their return to work.

6. Maintaining Contact

Where possible, regular contact should be maintained with the organisation throughout the sabbatical. The frequency and method of contact will be agreed between staff and their line manager. Any relevant information will be sent to staff on sabbatical.

7. Alternate Employment

The period of unpaid sabbatical is granted on the understanding the staff will not take up any paid work during this period. If they should do so then they will automatically lose their right to return to work unless previous approval is granted by the senior officer and confirmed in writing.

8. Postponing the Date of Return to Work

If there are no suitable vacancies, the organisation may postpone the date of return for up to 28 days. Staff on sabbatical will be informed of the revised date in writing. If the organisation postpones the date of return, staff will not be paid any salary or other benefits during the postponement. However, the period of postponement will count towards the continuous service.

The date of return may be postponed by the staff on medical grounds only. The maximum period of postponement allowed is 28 days. If staff are unable to return to work after this period, the organisation may review their right to return to work. Staff will not be paid any salary or other benefits during the postponement but the period of delay will count towards continuous service.

9. Returning to Work

Staff must give three months' notice in writing to the senior manager of their intention to return to work. Failure to do so will be treated as a resignation. In this circumstance, the senior officer will make all reasonable attempts to confirm the position. If no contact can be made, they will write to the staff member to advise of their termination of employment and confirm all contractual and otherwise benefits have ceased. The staff member will have the right to appeal the decision, the details of the appeal process will be confirmed in the termination letter.

When the staff member returns to work, their line manager will conduct a re-entry meeting and cover areas such as changes within the organisation, salary and holiday entitlement.

Any organisation reserves the right to alter or withdraw the scheme at any time.

10. Data Protection Act 2018

The organisation will treat all personal data in line with obligations under the current data protection regulations.