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## **Sabbatical Leave Policy**

**Revised and applicable from 26th February 2024**

**Signed:**

**Chair of Governors**

## **1. The leave**

Sabbatical leave is an extended time away from work that is granted to an employee for varying purposes, including personal reasons, professional and academic growth, learning and development of new skills, or rest and recuperation – while maintaining their status as an existing employee.

## **2. Unpaid leave and career breaks**

Sabbaticals are sometimes referred to interchangeably with the terms 'career break' or 'unpaid leave'. The name used is only one factor to consider when determining the legal position.

Unpaid leave is an umbrella term covering all types of leave without pay. This includes both authorised and unauthorised unpaid leave.

Career breaks describe longer periods of unpaid leave, during which the employment contract is usually discontinued. Like sabbaticals, the term 'career break' has no particular legal meaning. An example of a career break is a parent deciding not to return to work after maternity, paternity or adoption leave has ended, to continue caring for young children. Career break periods will not normally count towards years' service under a pension scheme.

Sabbaticals are unlike career breaks in that the contract continues. Sabbaticals at Plashet School are unpaid.

### **The Law**

There is no statutory right to take a career break or sabbatical, but many of those in the public sector in schools may offer such breaks, at the Head Teacher's discretion.

There are no specific employment law rules governing sabbaticals in the UK, although the right to request flexible working may be used by employees to seek a variety of working arrangements including sabbaticals.

## **3. Requests for Sabbatical Leave**

All requests for sabbatical leave should be made in writing by email or letter to the Head Teacher.

A Head Teacher may agree to requests for unpaid sabbaticals due to the salary savings however requests can also be refused for a number of specified business needs. All requests will be dealt with on a case by case basis.

## **4. Status of Employment during sabbaticals**

During unpaid sabbatical leave the contract of employment often does not remain in force. However, the employee's continuity of service may be preserved provided the Head Teacher and employee agree that this is the case.

During the sabbatical leave, employees must be aware that their pay progression will be frozen (unless otherwise agreed). Hence, it is essential to inform them of this fact, and they should not anticipate any pay progression during this time

**5. Best Practise during Sabbatical Leave**

Schools should help employees to feel more involved so that their return is easier. The sabbatical agreement can contain an obligation to stay in touch. Design a process to share information such as school updates and news may, or send regular email notifications to encourage engagement. The employee can be encouraged to return to the workplace during sabbaticals for occasional team meetings as well as for training by agreement.