

Bishop Chadwick Catholic Education Trust



St Anthony's Girls' Catholic Academy

Policy type:	School
Policy: 21	Career Break Policy
Ratified by MAT Directors:	December 2020
Head Teacher signature:	<i>M. Shepherd.</i>
Chair of Directors signature:	<i>Sr. M. Josepha</i>
Review Date:	December 2021
Ownership:	M. Shepherd (Head Teacher)

Career Break Policy

This document sets out Our Lady of Mercy Education Trust career break policy. It has been developed to take into account the ethos of the trust, current guidance and legislation.

Career breaks can benefit both employers and employees. This policy aims to clarify the terms on which career breaks are granted and the consequences of taking a break for an employee's future employment, statutory rights and contractual benefits.

Who does the policy apply to?

This policy will apply to **all staff** employed to work within the trust.

Reviewing the Policy:

The policy will be reviewed annually during the autumn term by the trust directors.

1. Introduction.

1.1 Our Lady of Mercy Education Trust is committed to maintaining an efficient and effective workforce and in doing so recognises that some employees may wish to interrupt their careers, for a period of time, and return to the employment of the trust to continue their employment at a later date.

2. Data Protection.

2.2 When managing a request for a career break, the trust processes personal data in accordance with its data protection policy. Data collected from the point at which the request is received is held securely and accessed by, and disclosed to, individuals only for the purposes of managing his/her request for a career break. Inappropriate access or disclosure of employee data constitutes a data breach and should be reported in accordance with the trust's data protection policy immediately. It may also constitute a disciplinary offence, which will be dealt with under the trust's disciplinary policy.

3. What is a career break?

3.1 The term "career break" applies to an unpaid leave of absence (usually long term (6 months- 2 years)).

3.2 A career break may be granted for a specified purpose such as:

- Family - to care for or support family members;
- Personal - extended periods of travel, voluntary service, personal development or to undertake medical treatment;
- Education - time to pursue full-time education.

3.3 The purposes listed above are not exhaustive and consideration will be given to all requests.

4. Eligibility.

4.1 An employee with at least 26 weeks of continuous service is eligible to apply for a career break.

4.2 The request must be supported by the trust.

5. Duration.

5.1 Career breaks can be requested for a minimum of 6 months and a maximum of 2 years.

5.2 More than one career break can be requested during an employee's career with the trust; however, the combined length of career breaks cannot exceed 2 years. In such situations, an employee should apply for each career break separately and consideration will be given to each application as appropriate.

6. Requesting a career break.

6.1 All requests must be made in writing to the CEO using the form attached (Appendix 1).

6.2 The purpose and duration of the career break must be clearly stated in each application.

6.3 Each request will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Agreeing to one request will not set a precedent or create the right for another employee to be granted a career break.

6.4 Where a request is approved, written confirmation of the terms of the agreement will be sent in writing to the employee.

6.5 It will not always be possible to agree to requests for a career break. Requests may be refused where granting the break would make meeting the needs of the trust difficult. For example, where:

- The trust is unlikely to secure appropriate temporary cover for the employee;
- the needs of the trust require that the employee's specific skills are retained or similar;
- the impact upon pupils and colleagues of the suggested career break.

6.6 Where a request is refused, the CEO will confirm the reasons to the employee in writing. It may be appropriate to discuss other options with the employee, such as whether flexible working would be suitable for the employee, and if this could be accommodated by the trust.

6.7 The employee has the right to appeal the decision. Appeals should be made in writing (clearly stating the grounds of appeal) to the Clerk to the Directors within ten working days of receipt of the written notification of the original decision. The Appeals Committee will arrange a meeting to consider the appeal as soon as reasonably possible. The employee can be accompanied to the appeal meeting by either a trade union/professional association representative or work colleague.

7. Conditions of service,

7.1 All terms and conditions of employment will be deferred during the break. Continuity of service is not broken, however, for the purposes of calculating length of service the period of the break will be discounted for all purposes (e.g. annual leave) other than for redundancy where length of service will continue to accrue.

7.2 Pension Scheme payments will be deferred during the period of the break. Alternatively an employee can arrange to continue contributions prior to commencing the break. During the break employer contributions will not be paid by the trust.

7.3 Periods of sickness during a career break will not attract an entitlement to occupational sick pay. There is no requirement for the employee to report sickness absence or provide certification.

7.4 Annual leave should be taken before commencing a career break as no payment will be made in lieu of unused annual leave.

7.5 Employees are able to undertake paid employment during the period of their career break. However, they must seek permission from the trust prior to starting any other employment to ensure that there is no conflict of interest with the trust.

7.6 The Code of Conduct for staff will continue to apply to employees who are on a career break.

7.7 Where the trust carries out a restructure, or if a redundancy situation or any other organisational change arises, whilst an employee is on a career break, the employee will be kept informed and the appropriate procedures will be followed.

8. Contact arrangements.

8.1 All employees must give the CEO a contact number and address for the duration of the career break.

9. Trade union/professional association subscriptions.

9.1 An employee who receives approval to take a career break may wish to remain a member of a trade union/professional association. An individual will need to make alternative arrangements to pay subscriptions prior to commencing the career break.

10. Returning to work following a career break.

10.1 Three months prior to the completion of the career break the employee is required to confirm that s/he intends to return to work on a specified date. It may be necessary for the employee to have a short handover period and any relevant training or development activities which the employee is required to undertake will be given as soon as possible on return to work.

- 10.2 At the end of a career break it may not always be possible to guarantee a return to work to the same post. In these circumstances, employees pay and terms and conditions of employment will be broadly similar to the previous role.

APPENDIX 1 : Application form.

<u>Career Break Application</u>	
<p>The school treats personal data collected as part of processing an employee's request for a career break in accordance with our data protection policy. Information about how your data is used and the basis for processing your data is provided within the trust's employee privacy notice.</p>	
Your name:	
Your trust:	
Your personnel number;	
Your job title:	
Have you discussed this request with your Line Manager?	Yes / No
Have you made a previous application to the trust for a career break?	Yes / No
If so, please provide the dates of any previous applications:	

Details of your request, including the duration and reason for your request.

Please confirm your preferred start date. Please note that it may take several weeks for your request to be considered and, subject to approval, be implemented. You should therefore submit your application well in advance of the date you wish your request to start.

Preferred start date:

I think this requested change will affect the organisation as follows:

Please also state how, in your view, how affect(s) could be mitigated:

Signed:	
Date:	